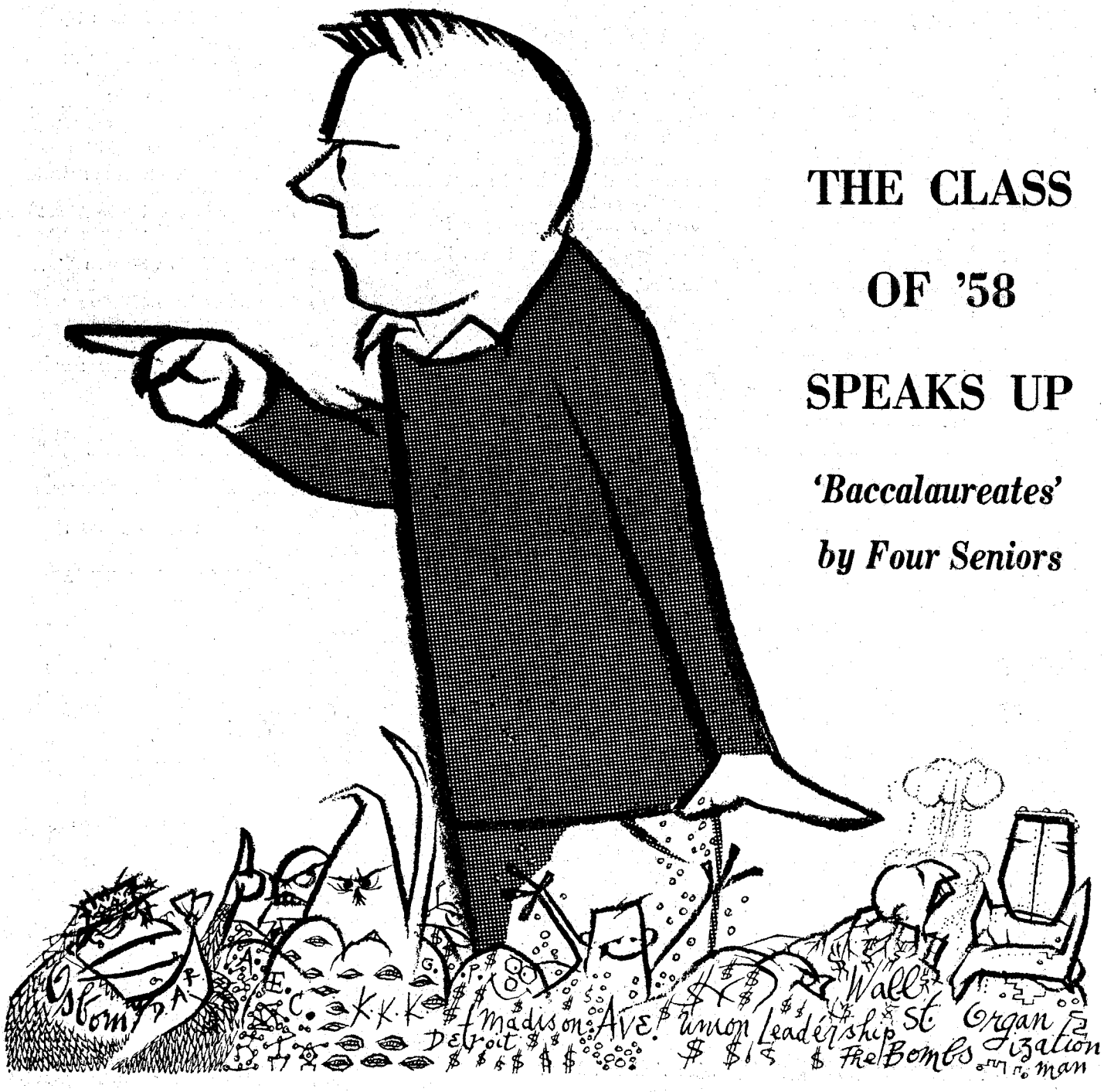
THE
NATION

MAY 17, 1958 . . 25c



THE CLASS OF '58 SPEAKS UP

'Baccalaureates' by Four Seniors

THIS RECESSION IS DIFFERENT . . *by Gardiner C. Means*

The Charles C. Sherrod Library
EAST TENNESSEE STATE COLLEGE
JOHNSON CITY, TENNESSEE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

Mr. Truman, Pro and Con

Dear Sirs: As a faithful *Nation* reader, permit me to express my disappointment with your editorial "Please, Mr. Truman!," printed in the April 26 issue. Mr. Truman has never been wont to temper his political language. Neither is he generally known for a consummate sense of tact. But to call him, as you did, a "little man" who fell "heir to responsibilities that are beyond his capabilities" is unhistorical . . .

When Mr. Truman became President, a great burden fell on his shoulders; he grew into his job and guided this country with firmness through a turbulent seven years of its history. He left the Executive Branch strengthened, and the country strong. He showed the courage that greatness is made of by the firmness with which he made great decisions. The man who dropped the atom bomb to end the war, under whose Administration our postwar policy was fashioned, who decided to commit us in Korea—this is not a man who must strut as a sideshow on the national stage to win some final applause.

STEPHEN A. SCHUKER

Ithaca, N.Y.

Dear Sirs: Mr. Truman should be condemned even more harshly than you did in *The Nation*. But praise be for what you did say.

ELLWOOD BANNING

Joplin, Mo.

Ezra Pound's Champions

Dear Sirs: We are not opposed to having Ezra Pound removed from the Washington asylum where he had been kept for twelve years. There are enough disturbed people in our Capital without him. What makes us sad is that it takes a psychopathic disciple of fascism to spur Frost, Hemingway, MacLeish and other leading literary figures to political activity. Their intercession on Pound's behalf was the first public stand on a controversial political matter of this kind that many of them have taken since they spoke out against the Nazis, or Franco's invasion of Spain.

We hope more of our fellow-craftsmen will now join writers such as Waldo Frank and speak out for some of the political prisoners still in jail in this country. Many of these have a long record of anti-fascist activity—Gil Green, Robert Thompson, Henry Winston are Smith Act prisoners whom President Eisenhower can free. Morton Sobell is serving thirty years as a tragic reminder that the Rosenberg case is not dead.

WALTER LOWENFELS
PHILLIP BONOSKY

Mays Landing, N.J.

Got His Goatee

Dear Sirs: A fellow non-conformist hails Mr. Eric W. Hughes, Jr., [Letters column, May 13]. It is good to know that there are people around who will say baa-baa when their goatee is got. The dilemma is this: either be a "canned" personality or be canned.

Employment agency—anyone?

DAVID DELMAN

Cleveland, Ohio

Pesticides

Dear Sirs: The recent article by David Cort ("The Pesticide That Came to Dinner", April 12 issue) is no doubt a harbinger of what will eventually be a problem to the country. That Mr. Cort is an energetic and able person is evidenced by the diversity of his recent articles for *The Nation;* however I feel his latest contribution to be the result of limited research into a field where he has little basic knowledge. Equating the killing of carp with the killing of fiddler crabs seems to verify this confusion.

Perhaps the best solution for the problem presented is not to indict the government for its pest programs, but rather to focus attention on the need to keep the soil in which our food is grown, and off of which our animals feed, in its natural balance. Vegetation in such soil doesn't fall prey to the insects which threaten our existence and hence doesn't require chemical treatment. Louis Bromfield in his writings from his Malabar Farm was perhaps this principle's most eloquent advocate. The government isn't as nearly to be blamed for its insecticide programs as for its lack of research in this field.

RUSSELL LEWIS

West Andover, Mass.

Dear Sirs: In connection with Mr. Cort's article condeming the widespread use of pesticides, may I quote the following from the Alabama State Department of Conservation bulletin: "The Alabama Department of Conservation

(*Continued on page 449*)

In This Issue

EDITORIALS

429 ● .

ARTICLES

432 ● The Class of '58 Speaks Up

432 ● Heirs to Disillusion
by DAVID EGGER and ELLEN MAYTAG (Stanford)

434 ● The Giant Is Too Big
by ROBERT L. McGOWAN (U. of Washington)

436 ● A World of Impossibilities
by THOMAS C. CHOMENTOWSKI (Dartmouth)

438 ● Something to be Brave About
by RONALD M. SOHIGIAN (Yale)

440 ● The Durable Mr. Stassen
by DAN WAKEFIELD

442 ● This Recession Is Different
by GARDINER C. MEANS

448 ● Perspective on the Press: Scoops by Time and Newsweek
by FRED J. COOK

BOOKS AND THE ARTS

450 ● Irreverence in Poetry
by M. L. ROSENTHAL

452 ● The Loss of Debate
by WILLIAM A. WILLIAMS

453 ● Torches in the Street
by KENNETH REXROTH

454 ● The African Clown
by PHILIP WOODYATT

455 ● Music
by LESTER TRIMBLE

455 ● Theatre
by ROBERT HATCH

Crossword Puzzle (opp. 456)
by FRANK W. LEWIS

George G. Kirstein, Publisher
Carey McWilliams, Editor
Victor H. Bernstein, Managing Editor
Robert Hatch, Books and the Arts

Harold Clurman, Theatre
M. L. Rosenthal, Poetry
Mary Simon, Advertising Manager

Staff Contributors: W. Macmahon Ball, Carolus, Maxwell Geismar, Harvey O'Connor, Andrew Roth, Howard K. Smith, Dan Wakefield, Alexander Werth, H. H. Wilson.

The Nation, May 17, 1958. Vol. 186, No. 20

The Nation, published weekly (except for omission of four summer issues) by The Nation Company and copyright 1958, in the U.S.A. by the Nation Associates, Inc., 333 Sixth Avenue, New York 14, N. Y. Second class mail privileges authorized at New York, N. Y.

Subscription Prices Domestic—One year $8, Two years $14, Three years $20. Additional postage per year, Foreign and Canadian $1.

Change of Address: Three weeks' notice is required for change of address, which cannot be made without the old address as well as the new.

Information to Libraries: The Nation is indexed in Readers Guide to Periodical Literature, Book Review Digest, Index to Labor Articles, Public Affairs, Information Service, Dramatic Index.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 17, 1958
VOLUME 186, NUMBER 20

THE NATION

EDITORIALS

The Conditioning of Joe Doakes

At 10:30 a.m. E.S.T. on May 6 (New York time), one of our periodic experiments in manipulating the public mind began with what one journalistic poet called a "glissande of sirens." Millions of proud, free-born Americans trooped obediently to the air-raid shelters, such as building lobbies and hallways, whose collapse any structural engineer could guarantee if a megaton bomb landed five miles away. Among the good citizens was President Eisenhower, who differs from most of his countrymen in that he can descend into a real shelter, a secret underground command post, the location of which every newspaper man in Washington knows. In New York, Mayor Wagner, wearing a civil-defense helmet and a broad smile, was photographed braving the bombs in Times Square. He had reason to be happy, for only 419,086 New Yorkers were killed and 849,458 injured. Over the entire country 25,000,000 more lives were saved than would have been possible a year ago—surely a handsome dividend from the Civil Defense Administration to the people of the nation who are its wards.

Those who do not savor the thrills of leadership and obedience may take a sour view of these recurring emergencies in which statisticians figure with an accuracy of one part in a million casualties which, even granting their premises, could not possibly be estimated in advance with an accuracy of one part in five. From this possibly subversive standpoint, what is the actual purpose of the imaginary incursions of Russian aircraft (it was kind of them not to use missiles) and the imaginary millions of dead and wounded? Whatever the purpose, the effect seems to be fourfold:

1. To convince Joe Doakes that war is, if not inevitable, at least so likely that we must prepare to the tune of some $45 billion a year.

2. To convince Joe that, as a result of the heroic efforts of the civil-defense proctors, he has a chance to survive even if fifty, sixty or seventy million of his countrymen perish.

3. To convince Joe that, though the peril is imminent (or why the alerts?), if he obeys the orders of those whom God in His infinite wisdom has placed over him in civil defense, somehow things will work out for the best, or at least not for the worst.

4. To keep Joe's mind off political and economic questions which can't be solved by fake drills or other hogwash. Who cares about taxes or prices or desegregation when the country is in mortal peril?

Motives may vary from the best to the worst, but no better gimmick has ever been devised to paralyze the public and keep it paralyzed.

The Obsolescence of Slogans

The eminent historian Arnold Toynbee suggested in a recent interview that the nuclear age may have outmoded the injunction, "Give me liberty or give me death." Patrick Henry was affirming his willingness to take a calculated risk on behalf of principle, and by implication urging others to join him. He was prepared to hang, if his cause was lost, in company with a few score of other patriots. But would he have been willing to stake the life of the entire human race to get rid of George III, or some even more abominable tyrant? The question answers itself: the Founding Fathers were not madmen.

One would think that there could not be two minds about this, but there are. Thus Irving Kristol, writing on "The Question of the Bomb" in the *Spectator*, criticizes Carl Friedrich von Weizsacker, the German physicist who, on personal religious grounds, declines to take part in the making of nuclear weapons. The question, says Kristol, is whether there is "anything in life to be treasured more than life itself?" We think there is, but we do not think that dying in a duel with nuclear weapons will preserve whatever is treasured, nor do we think that anyone has the moral right to force others, including children and non-combatants, to die for a cause which in his eyes involves the ultimate choice.

There is not the slightest evidence that we must choose between death and communism, which is what is actually meant by those who exhort us to be ready to die. Nuclear war would not preserve freedom: it would destroy freedom and everything else worth living (or dying) for. To the extent that it left any human beings alive at all, it could only result in a form of

MAY 15 [illegible]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

society beside which the fascism of Hitler, Mussolini, and our ally Franco would appear positively benign.

Death is not too high a price to pay for freedom; on this we are all agreed. But what value would justify the destruction of human life on this planet, not to mention the destruction of the culture of the last two thousand years? To have moral meaning, this question must be raised in a manner that gives each individual a chance to answer it, not in a way that forecloses individual option. To many Americans, we suspect, life under a Communist dictatorship would still seem worth living; millions of Russians find it so. And those Americans who found the prospect intolerable would, as individuals, have the privilege of committing suicide or, better, of combining to resist it. In contrast, to reach for nuclear bombs is tantamount—assuming it were possible—to disorbiting the moon and causing it to crash into the earth in order to destroy the Kremlin. Obsolete slogans no longer provide automatic answers to the hideous questions posed by nuclear weapons.

The Education of Richard Nixon

The Nation's admiration for Richard Nixon is, to put it mildly, limited. Nonetheless the Vice President is entitled to congratulations for the manner in which he has accepted the noisy vilification of various anti-Yankee elements on his current Latin-American tour. Under trying circumstances, he has played a difficult role with courage and determination. Since Mr. Nixon might some day be President, we are glad that he has had the experience. He knows now, if he did not know before, to what extremes of feeling even peoples celebrated for their hospitality and generous spirit may be driven by hunger and poverty and humiliation. He knows, too, if he did not know before, what the "suction pump" policy which the Eisenhower Administration substituted for that of the Good Neighbor has done to American prestige in the lands he has visited (see "Policy of the Suction Pump" by Betty Kirk, *The Nation*, October 5, 1957). It is even possible that Mr. Nixon may now be able to convince the President of the need to review the Good Neighbor policy.

Advice for Detroit

In our December 22, 1956, issue we published a story by David Cort, "You, Too, Can Drive a Jukebox," which, if it had been read and heeded by the automobile industry, would have gone some way toward averting the catastrophe of 1958 and the foreseeable one of 1959. Now that it isn't selling, the 1958 car is the villain, and suddenly the press, and in particular the news weeklies, is throwing rotten tomatoes at it. Since the 1959 cars are to be even longer and chromier than the 1958 models, the press will have to keep right on throwing. But it is too late. The design and tooling of the 1959s were largely frozen eighteen months ago. The popular press, which gets the bulk of automobile advertising, is performing the worst possible service to the industry by its belated clamor, second only to its failure to criticize when criticism could have helped, two years ago.

The primary responsibility, of course, lies with the industry. There is no objection to big cars, although in a city they are as ill-mannered as sitting in a crowded subway train with one's legs outstretched in the aisle. Let the manufacturers make big cars for those who need the prestige and have the money. But let them also make modest, economical cars. If General Motors, Ford and Chrysler don't make them, others will. And since careers and issues are interrelated and there are still some Detroit big shots who insist on manufacturing only big cars, maybe some executive heads must roll before things will get better in Detroit and in the American economy.

Those Mystery Pilots

From the outset, arms and other supplies have been parachuted to the Indonesian rebels by unidentified four-engine aircraft of American manufacture; this much is generally known. It is also conceded that air power is the decisive element in Indonesia's civil war and that the rebels had neither fighter planes nor skilled pilots when the rebellion was launched. Yet recently rebel planes—four B-26s and two Mustang fighters—manned by well-trained pilots, bombed a British tanker, an Italian freighter, a Greek ship and a ship of Panamanian registry (killing nine). The American press has been unable—or reluctant—to identify the sources of the aircraft or the nationality of the pilots. *Time*, for example, refers to "the mystery pilots." But the planes and pilots were obviously supplied by South Korea or Nationalist China—or, perhaps, by "soldiers of fortune" such as some of Chennault's merry men based on Formosa. In any of these cases the knowledge, if not the approval, of American officials must be presumed. Over a month ago President Syngman Rhee announced his intention of intervening on the side of the rebels. On March 31, he told Scripps-Howard correspondent Jim Lucas that the rebels could have as much materiel from South Korea's plentiful supplies as they might need. He added that he was appealing to "all free nations of Asia" to join in assurances of support to the rebels. "Let's go help them," he said. "Who's going to stop us?"

What, then, is American policy? We are not neutral; that much is clear. For we refused the Indonesian Government's request for arms—thereby forcing it to seek supplies from the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and China—while knowing that arms and other supplies were

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

being parachuted to the rebels in planes of American manufacture. But while he is not neutral, Mr. Dulles is not an active interventionist, either. Indeed, he can't be, for however much he may object to the composition of the Indonesian Cabinet or to certain recent tendencies in Jakarta, the Government there is recognized by this country and is a member of the United Nations. Hence the difficulty with Mr. Dulles' policy is that it leaves the Soviets in a position where they can, with propriety, supply the legitimate Indonesian Government with whatever arms it may desire. The other day the first Soviet fighter and bomber planes arrived and, if this latest "brush-fire war" is not extinguished promptly, Communist "volunteers" will soon make their appearance in the wake of Soviet equipment. In a showdown, the odds strongly favor the legitimate Government which, once it emerged victorious from a long and costly civil war, would be a great deal more anti-American than it is at this moment. And Mr. Dulles' grand SEATO alliance would be outflanked.

The Tonic of Irreverence

J. Edgar Hoover may not be the most influential or the most popular government official in Washington, but there can be no doubt that he has long enjoyed a phenomenal immunity from the curiosity and criticism of the press corps. Even President Eisenhower, at the height of his popularity, failed to achieve the degree of inviolability that Mr. Hoover has long enjoyed. Nor is the press alone in its unwillingness to examine Mr. Hoover as though he were a mortal man, born of mortal parents, much less a public servant who might be asked questions. Citizens, lay critics, organizational spokesmen of all kinds have been equally reluctant to suggest that he might be subject to criticism now and then.

Against this background, several items in last week's news are of more than passing interest. First the *New Yorker* (May 3) examined FBI crime statistics and found them shrill and false. Then the president of the National Association of Broadcasters actually "took issue" with Mr. Hoover who, in an editorial in the FBI *Bulletin*, had blamed "movies and television presentations which flaunt indecency and applaud lawlessness" for the "crime wave" which the head of the FBI discovers at frequent and predictable intervals. Then the National Council of Churches called upon Mr. Hoover to direct the FBI to do something about the spate of bombings and other acts of racial violence which have occurred in Birmingham, Jacksonville, Miami and other Southern cities. Finally, Cyrus S. Eaton, the Cleveland industrialist, told a nation-wide television audience that "scores of agencies" are nowadays engaged in "investigating, in snooping, in informing, in creeping up on people," and then went on to say that "the scientist is conscious that the Federal Bureau of Investigation is breathing down the back of his neck all the time, scaring him"—and this despite the fact that there are no Communists in this country "to speak of, except in the minds of those on the payroll of the FBI."

That such untoward sentiments should be voiced about Mr. Hoover—audibly, publicly, unapologetically—is proof positive that a growing section of the public is being subverted by the tonic of irreverence.

The Historical Imperative

Granted the premises, the military rejuvenation of the West German half-state is a classic example of the historical imperative. Five years ago, the concept arose of a European Defense Community to which Germans would contribute soldiers. To this, France objected; and it followed, logically, that instead of a German contribution to an international army, there should arise a purely national German force. Under the treaties of 1954, then, there have been created a West German Army, Navy and Air Force. But fighters need weapons, which the Germans' former enemies supplied in a steady stream. The first weapons were conventional: rifles, tanks, artillery, fighter craft. But when the tactical nuclear weapon became conventional, was it not logical that the West German should have this, too? Last March, under the lash of Chancellor Adenauer and Defense Minister Strauss, the West German parliament approved the logical, and Washington shortly will supply Matadors (but without nuclear warheads) to Herr Strauss's forces. But the historical imperative has not spent itself. What about the nuclear warheads themselves—do they not follow logically? And if the possession, why not the production? Is the Bonn treasury likely to be content for long to pour out money for buying and maintaining the nuclear vehicle without eventually assuring itself that a supply of nuclear warheads is available?

Even assuming (a dangerous assumption) that nuclear-missile bases in Germany are necessary for Western security, was it really necessary to continue this chain reaction? Two atomic powers, the United States and Britain, are among the NATO countries with bases in West Germany. Is a Matador on West German soil less deadly in American hands than in German? At the very least, American and British missile bases on the Elbe represent bargaining points with the Russians; they can one day be withdrawn if a quid pro quo calls for such action. But once the West Germans have nuclear weapons, where does that leave Western bargaining power?

Are Matadors in West German hands really necessary for Western security? Or are they only necessary to make sure that the Rapacki plan for neutralizing Central Europe never comes to fruition?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE CLASS OF '58 SPEAKS UP

Under the title "The Careful Young Men," this magazine published on March 9, 1957, an appraisal of the current college generation by sixteen distinguished teachers of creative writing. On the eve of graduation exercises throughout the country for the Class of '58, the Editors thought it timely to permit a part, at least, of that generation to speak for itself. We therefore asked the teacher-contributors to our March 9, 1957, issue to select one of their senior students to write a "commencement oration" for The Nation *which would "honestly and courageously reflect his opinion of his own college career, the caliber of his colleagues, the effectiveness of the faculty, the usefulness of the curriculum and the state of mind with which he confronts what is commonly referred to as 'the river of life.'" Few of the score of young men and women who submitted articles attempted to answer* all *the questions implicit in the assignment. But what they chose to ignore reveals as much about them, perhaps, as what they chose to stress. Among the "orations" received, the following four—two from East Coast universities, two from West Coast—were adjudged to be the most interesting, if not in each case the best written; and, taken together, they come as close as any sampling can to reflecting the general tenor of all.*

We thank those students whose contributions we could not use because of lack of space, as well as the teahers who made this venture possible.—Editors.

Heirs to Disillusion

David Egger and Ellen Maytag (Stanford '58)

IF I WERE in charge of graduation ceremonies, I would invite as speaker a man who had proved his understanding of our generation by writing something that made sense to us. But rather than listen passively to his analysis of our strengths and weaknesses, and his call to action, I would like to have an opportunity to question him, to give my own point of view where I believed his to be incorrect. Perhaps my classmates would speak up, too. We are a thoughtful generation and cautious, but we are not silent.

Listen:

SPEAKER: You, the graduates of 1958, are potentially the worst generation this country has ever had. Each graduating class has been faced with problems it did not create, but you are the first generation to know that your failure will mean the destruction of mankind. If you do not find a method of controlling nuclear weapons, civilization will disappear. While some members of my generation believed themselves free to ignore Hitler's rise or the Spanish Civil War, none of you is free to ignore Khrushchev or the hydrogen bomb.

Fortunately, you have strong assets. You grew up in time of war. You learned how senseless, how beastly, civilized peoples could be. Perhaps you accepted too readily mass murders, nuclear destruction and cold war. But at least you have faced all your life what your parents still do not understand—that this is a new world, a world which "finds nothing sacred in the sheer nakedness of being human." Fortunately, too, you have seen that pat solutions—socialism, pacifism, communism and democracy—are naive and unfeasible; that one cannot perfect, but only improve. You are precocious realists, heirs to your parents' disillusion. Because you have listened to them and learned from their mistakes, you do not act as they did. The very fact that you have profited from their advice makes you a mystery to them.

You are sophisticated, but what disturbs my generation most is your apparent apathy. It looks as if many of you are planning to take the easy way. Unlike the young of my day, who wanted to save the world, to make a million dollars, or to write the great American novel, you aim no higher than a two-car garage, a suburban bungalow, a job with General Motors. Where is your ambition? I am not calling for revolutionary zeal; you have learned early and well that the world is not easily or safely changed. I only fear that your sophistication will lead not to mature action but to paralysis. International problems *are* enormous. Modern life grows more and more complex. But paralysis means self-destruction. You are too prone to identify the present with the permanent. The problems facing this country will not wait. Unless you can take the step from intelligent analysis to purposeful action, you will lose the world by default.

FIRST STUDENT: Wait a minute, what's wrong with my wanting a house in the suburbs? If I don't look out for myself, who will? I can't make a fortune because of the income tax. Anyway, I don't want the headaches connected with a lot of money as long as I can buy everything I want with my salary. As for politics, what can I do? The odds against me are too great. For one thing, the problems are too complicated; for another, national politics is dirty business. I'm better off seeing that my community has adequate schools and that the Junior Chamber of Commerce has some life in it. These are things that I *can* do; they're the only things that hold much meaning for me. As for employment in a large corporation, well, I have to eat. I want a wife and children. And I don't want to work all my life only to starve when I'm sixty. When my parents were young, they didn't think ahead; I'm not going to repeat their mistake.

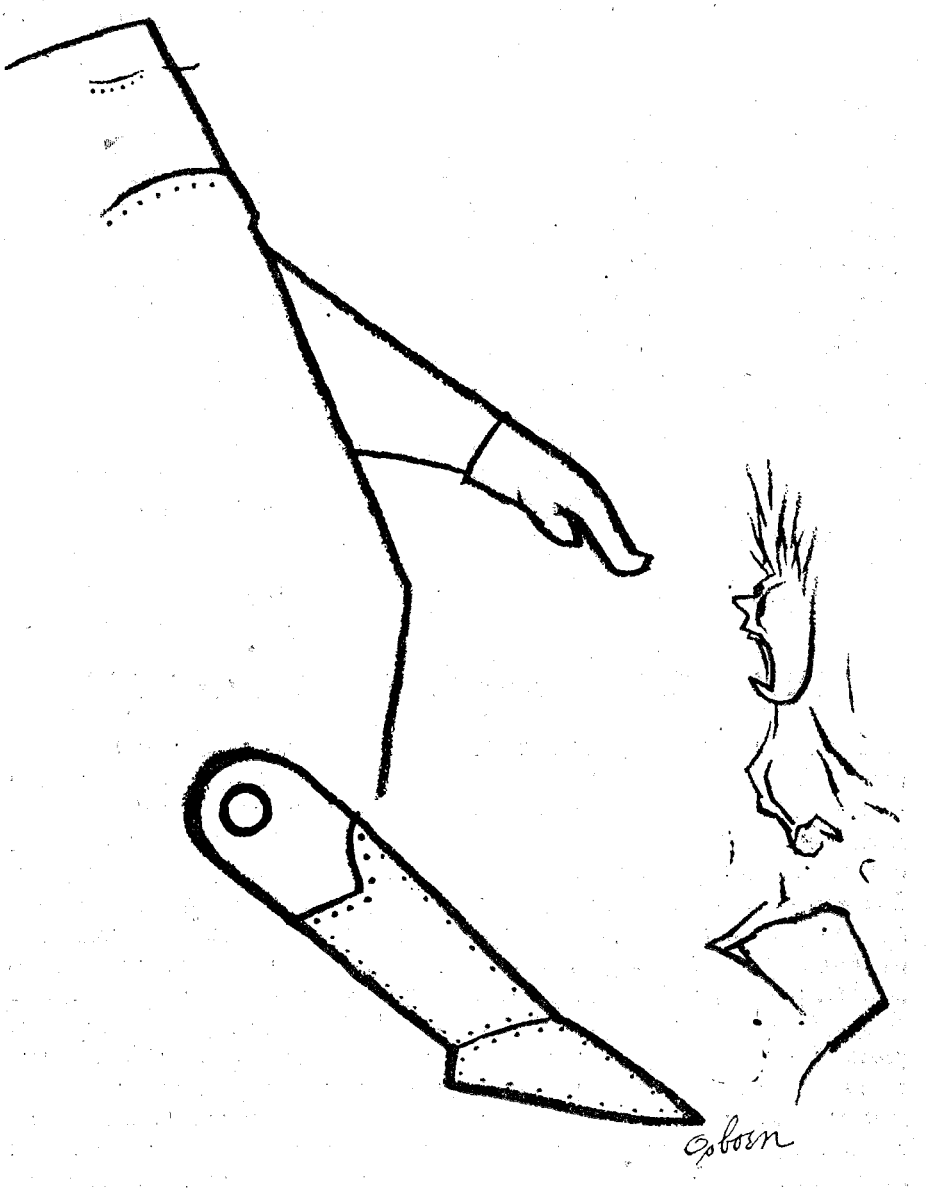
What's wrong with General Motors? It's an exciting organization, pioneering in research. It offers good money and quick promotions. I'll

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conform eight hours a day and be a free man in my own home. The world will probably be better off without my messing in it. The experts seem confused, but they're probably doing their best. If they blow us up, it's too bad. But what can *I* do?

SECOND STUDENT: Not all of us want the suburbs. Some of us want to make this a world that doesn't threaten to fly apart at any minute. Don't tell us the problems. Tell us what we can do about them. Our sophistication hides real ignorance. We're too serious for football games and rallies; we're too smart for panaceas and Share the Wealth. It seems stupid to waste energy in the pointless scurrying around that your generation was so fond of. If we could find something that made sense, something that would be of real benefit to ourselves and to mankind, we would do it. But no one, least of all you, seems to know what to do. Sure, we've learned from the mistakes you've made. But you spend too much time telling us things we already know. Tell us what you have learned as adults. Help us to profit from your experience. We know we can't trust reporters, announcers or telecasters. When the Russians publish lies about their country, our government answers with its own lies. It's hard to see the difference. Our professors perpetuate lies; our university's administration has fed us on a four-year diet of half-truths. For example, administration spokesmen assure us that "the university is very sensitive to student opinion." But when the student body makes a request, it is turned down with a curt, "the university is not a weather vane." Everyone gives us reasons, but they're not reasons.

It's not only Stanford. At Princeton the club-rushing season is the occasion for flagrant anti-Semitism. In the face of adverse publicity, the Interclub Committee there recently issued a pious statement saying that it disapproved of discrimination on moral grounds; the president of the university happily agreed. The president said that discrimination at Princeton was "greatly exaggerated,



but this statement should help redress the balance in that regard." This beast never existed and we killed it!

Whenever some of us try to effect changes at our own university, we are stymied by hyprocrisy in high places. When faculty and students advocated that the university use achievement tests in screening its applicants, the administration agreed, as it usually does. But nothing happened because, as they insisted, "academic changes take a long time." We suggested that the university invite Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer to speak at our commencement. The reply: "Graduation is no time to flex our academic-freedom muscles." We would like to believe what we are told, but how can we? We can spot a facade, but we can't see behind it. We can analyze, but few of us can act.

SPEAKER: In the first place, you can't expect to believe in anything completely. You know a lot about what is wrong; go ahead and try to fix it. Your generation is spoiled. You tire too easily. You can't expect to know how to take big steps until you've practiced by taking little ones. It took thirty years and two world wars to establish the United Nations. Are you going to let it fail? A strengthened United Nations is our only hope, but you won't get it from the suburbs. Some of you must go and work for it. We must find out more about our allies and our enemies. Why don't you join the American Civil Liberties Union and help open up travel to China?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Demonstrate against the hydrogen bomb. If we are to have effective control, you must demand it.

Where should you begin if you want to improve your university or your government? Power usually resides at the top. If you get nowhere with a secretary, go to the vice-president. If the vice-president is an ass, see the president. It is only men who make the decisions; it is only men with whom you must deal. Few of my generation justify their actions simply by saying, "It's always been done this way." Some of us try to be reasonable. Keep after us if you believe our reasons faulty. Some of us find it easier to lie. Expose us!

Don't be afraid to praise or to blame. If you do this, people will dislike you. But you must work for what you believe is right. Be immoderate sometimes, and expect to make mistakes. How else will you learn? You are sophisticated and intelligent. You claim a hatred for hypocrisy. You are realistic enough to see problems in all their complexities. This is to your advantage if you do not yield to the conviction that there is nothing you can do. You've graduated, now go to work. The future of mankind will depend upon your imagination and guts.

The Giant Is Too Big

Robert L. McGowan (U. of Washington '58)

WHERE, oh where are the flaming youth of yesteryear? Where are those fearless goldfish eaters, the bearded bohemians, the starry eyes, impassioned cries, the brave young heroes and the lost young souls? Gone? All gone? Does automation rule the day? Do robots march through ivy halls? Who are we—we who are condemned by our silence, we of the silent generation? Are we mere shades of gray flannel, flitting silently through the college years? Are we the unspeaking spokesmen of the status quo? Does youth now surrender without a fight?

Would it be enough to say that we are the children of our age? Perhaps it would—for this is the bald truth of the matter. Hollywood was our kindergarten, television is our finishing school. We have risen (or were pushed) through the ranks of the new education, well-adjusted, socially oriented, other-directed, liberally educated. We are the elite in ever-increasing numbers (when does an elite become a mass?). We are the new college generation, the inheritors of the golden age of the atom—but unfortunately not knowing what to do with our inheritance, not even knowing how to squander it, let alone how to preserve it.

It appears that even George Babbitt had standards higher than those in evidence today. True, Babbitt saw little point in such time-wasters as Shakespeare courses, but he did favor replacing them with something solid and useful like Business English. But if our professors speak truth when they bemoan our present state of half-illiteracy, then we have not even mastered the English.

The battle of words today wages about the cry of conformity. This is the usual charge against us. We have, it is said, no identity—as a group or as individuals; we can be distinguished more easily by our dress than by our ideas or standards. (Do the spring's commencement gowns cover gray flannel?)

In a local history class, a majority of students voted in favor of Socrates' execution. It made quite a stir among the professors, but the students showed little surprise . . . or concern. Some recent polls on various campuses reveal a fantastic unacquaintance with such basic items as the Bill of Rights. Something, it would seem, is sadly amiss. As the products of this educational process, we have some stake in the matter. We might do well to ask ourselves just what the product is, why it is what it is, and what it's for.

In the criticisms of today's students, there is usually an implicit assumption that the college student should represent something different and in some ways better. He should be characterized by an independence of mind, critical judgment, a set of personal values. And, it is said, these qualities are very hard to find. Perhaps they always were rather scarce, but never so atypical as today. Our values today are the values of the society—monetary, material, narrow. Society has left its mark, but the college education seems to have added nothing more than a thin gloss of sophistication.

But was anything more ever really intended? This, it is to be remembered, is democratic education. Is it not logical to expect that it would provide what the people want? And the last thing they want is a generation of eggheads. As a nation we combine a naively awesome attitude toward education with a deep-seated distrust of learning. This anti-intellectual attitude is very real and potent. Now, with climbing enrollments, is it to be wondered at if this feeling is more and more reflected on the campus?

BUT THEN, what is the ultimate goal of education? Success? Then we must remember that just because we are—by some standards — perhaps the most poorly educated college generation to date, this does not necessarily reflect our chances for success. In our normative society, adjustment and conformity are the keys to success. In these we are well-prepared, and in these good times our success seems assured. It may be that we have nothing to fear but success itself.

If we are so well prepared—so well designed to fit into the grooves of the highly-organized mediocrity that more and more characterizes our society—is this because of our schools or in spite of them? A little of both, it would seem. Perhaps it is more intentional on the elementary level. Can it be denied that we are to a considerable extent what Dewey intended us to be? That is not entirely fair. Dewey intended us to be what we are, plus something more. Nevertheless, we represent the measure of his success . . . or failure.

As for the colleges, their vigorous protests assure us that they never intended any such result. They seem

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

quite dismayed at their creation and would like very much to disown it. But they cannot entirely do so. True, we cannot hold them responsible for soaring enrollments and the resulting inadequacy of facilities and faculties. But are they entirely blameless in the matter of setting the standards of achievement? Masses of students can exert a powerful downward pull on those standards. It is far more difficult for the students to raise them; this must, for the most part, be done from above. By the time that the individual student realizes that he must set his own intellectual standards (and that they must usually be much higher than those demanded by the school), it has often taken four years and is probably too late. This is the real tragedy occurring in college today.

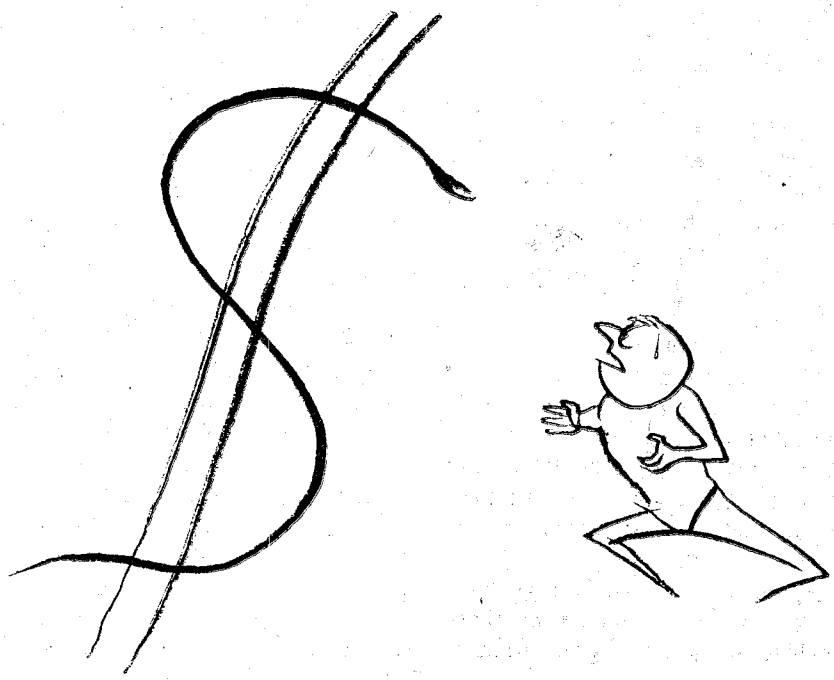
It may be that the colleges contribute to mediocrity in another way. The evils of over-specialization and purely professional education have been talked of enough. Today we all pay lip-service at least to the ideal of liberal education. But this is too often confused with general education—a light dose of this and that, never strong enough to make any real effect. It becomes a pedagogical perversion of the Greek ideal: nothing too much. The hallmark of this type of education is the survey course: a once-over-lightly treatment and small wonder if the ideas don't sink in. Taking a course or two on everything does not constitute a liberal education. Curriculums should be designed to concentrate less on scope and more on intensity. This would mean a lessening of elective freedom, but if that freedom is producing a generation of conformists, then perhaps a more proscribed curriculum would produce individuals. One can even imagine something as extreme as, say, a college year devoted to the Greeks. That would be a liberal education in the best sense.

There is still another influence which helps to explain our conformity, our silent support of the status quo. In the best tradition of Jack and the Beanstalk, youth has always been the giant killer. But if you examine the illustrations of that fairy tale, you notice that the giant is never so big that he cannot appear in the same picture with Jack. But what if the giant becomes too big? Every generation has its giant, its own particular problem. In the twenties, it faced a breaking-up of ethical values, the loss of a somewhat naive idealism, and was able to enjoy the luxury of being a lost generation. In the thirties, the economic and social problems gave the new generation its quota of battles. In the forties, the battles were more tangible and still easier to come by. Today we too have a problem: our ultimate problem is the issue of war or peace, but given a peculiar magnitude by the implications of the hydrogen bomb. The giant has grown appallingly large. The possible consequences are so devastating, the avenues of solution and control are so remote and difficult to determine, that perhaps we are afraid to accept our problem. At least we know that glib answers will not suffice; sophomoric enthusiasms wane in the face of growing arsenals. Not knowing how to cope with the problem, we tend to hope for the best; we cling to the status quo, hoping that if we don't alter the stability of things, no one else will, either. We have grown cautious, afraid of the consequences of misplaced enthusiasms.

To explain is not to excuse, but it may be the first step toward a solution. It seems likely that the final issuance of war or peace will not be unrelated to our choice of individualism or conformity. Those terms need a lot of defining, but at least we can safely say that too much conformity is always an evil and productive of many evils. There is a large amount of writing today supporting the assertion that ours is an age of conformity, distinguished by the fact that it conforms not to church or state or tradition, but rather to the more artificial standards of the communications media and the complex organizational structure of business and social activity. And it is quite apparent, when we look at ourselves, that college education is failing to provide an effective counterbalance to these influences.

Can it be that the individual is *passé*, a reactionary anachronism not needed in these days of the organization man? There is yet a lurking suspicion that our big problems will only be solved by individual thinking . . . and that can only be done by individuals. Today, in the wake of the sputniks, there is a public clamor for better education. But it is not yet clear whether the public wants educated men or better-trained technicians.

But if we can criticize ourselves, then the criticism does not tell the whole story. Babbitry does not sum up our character. We are something



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more than blurred faces in the sheepskin crowd. If we give that illusion, perhaps it is because we share a common trait: our silence. We are slow to give allegiance, suspicious of rashness and panaceas. It is not given to us to be a generation of rebels. But if caution does not become reaction, we may yet win some battles. Our immediate problem is finding a way to join the organization without becoming the organization man. To do this requires a hard, clear set of personal values. It is no job for the other-directed.

Many of us believe that we have caught a glimpse of such values during our student years. Few are without some sense of disappointment. Those years could have been better, the opportunities more frequent and available, the atmosphere more favorable. But neither can we say that we have always risen to the occasion. A century ago, Emerson prophesied the advent of the American Scholar, freed from his bondage to the traditions of the old world. It would be a bitter irony if we cast off those shackles only to adopt a new servitude to the shallow catchwords and cheap values of Madison Avenue. The time has come when we must commit ourselves. If we must do it quietly, at least let us not do it sheepishly.

A World of Impossibilities

Thomas C. Chomentowski (Dartmouth '58)

I ATTEND Dartmouth, an all-men's college. If it doesn't rain, we hold graduation out of doors. We sit on the grass with legs akimbo—modern Indians, though in black robes—in front of Class Day speakers. The eloquence of President Dickey, tall and rugged-looking, moves us, though perhaps not as much as does being outside in the spring air. The valedictorian will speak not as eloquently, not as convincingly, but nicely and youthfully. There will be the words, "We warn you," and "if you have done the job Dartmouth meant for you," and "Tomorrow" and "Man," and "Society," and, I'm fairly certain, "Russia." When it's all over we'll get up to go back to the fraternities for dinner, or maybe have a last picnic on a lovely New England hillside.

Once we spread and set the basket of food where everyone can reach it, it will be time to talk, trying for the truth. It's ironical that, if we were lucky, the first people we had to face when we entered the world were our parents, especially the female. And now, if we haven't lost them in the meantime, they're the first we must face again. Tell *them* that you're not going to start the job of becoming a great lawyer. Say thanks for the $10,000 they gave you to get through college; and say good-by to their sweet, full arms, because you're off to the bitter job of not forgetting that a bomb has been made. If you dare, say: There's your new law, the steel parchment of a changed constitution, the new electric fence, the very sun itself, with heat and all, unpredictable. . . . What does this job of not forgetting entail, Mom and Dad?

Mom, you're afraid I'll get hurt? (Again she's the first to face.) That's what the job entails—getting close, right up against something that can hurt. Because the bomb *can* hurt, and these are the times. The bomb can kill, and these are the times. Don't cry, Mom. This is commencement; be happy.

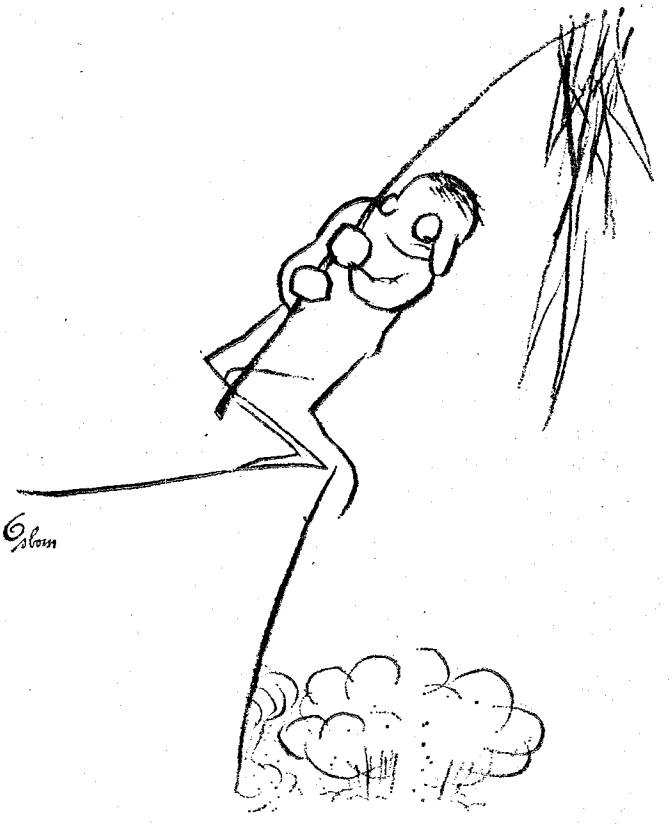
Dad, you needn't shout at me. I know I won't earn any money, and it makes it worse to hear you shout that I'll go broke. (Dad was always the second to face.) I can't be a lawyer, Dad. There have been men in college who told me something else is needed, and I believed it. I got the impression that I would be faking if I went to more schools or entered business. I have illusions of grandeur—that the bomb won't wipe us out, and I am trying to make that come true as much as I can. As far as I know, I can't do that by being a lawyer, a flier, a doctor. Although others *may*. Don't shout at me, Dad, with your warnings. It's commencement; enjoy this picnic for now; be happy. Dartmouth is beautiful. Let's not ruin it today with crying and shouting, the next to the last time I'll have to face you. Or maybe not. That will be a day.

But today, Mom and Dad (anyone else around cares for me?), don't fret over the likelihood of my failing. I have failed your wishes already, or I'm going to. That's only the beginning. That's the whole day, isn't it — beginning, commencing? Somebody else is failing today, too. Would you permit me to say that these are the times of the great failure? Or is it success that has created the inability to communicate on summits today—the great stalemate? I think our old successes are failing us now. Even now you fail to see that the strong, well-built son, like the one you saw sitting on the grass today, can fail. I will call the United States a son now, no longer a baby and not yet an adult, but a strong college graduate of '58. So many '58s and past years will be failures. These are the times for me, Mom and Dad. At least if I fail, I won't be lying. And maybe I'll have the chance of traveling the other road. Maybe if you, Dad, and I and some others admit we might fail, we will be called successful in speaking the first truth. If we aren't all big successes today, and the United States says the same thing, we have the promise of becoming successes in the future.

IN THIS last year at Dartmouth, the Class of '58 was told about the great issues in the world. The lectures everyone liked were the ones that scared us. When a speaker mentioned that we have no future, the general feeling was that he was an excellent speaker. When Bevan said, "You are young, but I warn you, you will have no future unless . . . ." we got out of our seats and gave him a standing ovation. "Unless." That gets our genitals moving once again. Threaten us. Fire us up. Tell us we are doomed. Then all the more chance we have to deny it. Another speaker said man was made great by man's creative power, but within that power lie the seeds of his destruction. Tell us we will roll in mud-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dy foxholes and then die. Tell us we will roll in the gutters under a rain of strontium 90. That takes the pressure off our consciences. Tell us we have been eating so much that soon there will be no more to eat. Tell us we've been having too many babies and not enough deaths. We like to be roughened up. We aren't altogether unlike women who like a beating once in a while. We'll have our beating, and we want the chance to beat up—yes, even in this time when an H-bomb might fall on us if we so much as shout a dirty curse at the wrong (right) person, or flex a muscle. Tell us tomorrow will never come. Such speech always sent us along the walks back to the fraternity houses with hot blood in our veins; and we want that more than anything.



IT IS A little sickening, though, being criticized much of the time—saying we are all these strange types of generations. Can we be so low, we the un-angry, the silent, the bop, the indifferent, the apathetic, the bland, the uncreative, the '58s and more—we who have been given the awful task of creating the new world order? Can't we be honored a bit merely because of what we will have to do? The bitterness of our elders, and our own, comes from the belief that we can't do it.

We can't use the old ways. College told us about man. Our elders have presented us with this wall within man, making him two. No, we have this blistering fire—the ultimate manifestation of an ancient symbol, the Promethean fire, which will weld man together whether he likes it or not (he doesn't like it). Pardon us if at first we're afraid to hold this fire. And don't blame us for drifting or being unclear in our purposes or for taking to the hot-rods and speeding down the highways. After all you've made a lot of highways better than schools.

Pardon us if we negotiate in abstract terms. The big bomb is too hard to look at. The bomb is worth millions of megatons of TNT. It's worth that much human effort, too. And that takes a while to conjure. Now we are going out to become doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, artists—that's a large part of the list. Our little Promethean fires are most important now. So don't blame us for not being great. We are doing what we know how to do, our college has shown us that; so we don't do what should be done. We are going out to do what our professors suggest—grow in spite of the crisis. Some day we'll come alive and grow because of the crisis.

Tomorrow, when we step outside the safe walls of alma mater, there will be griping about the recession. A lot of people are going to try to make that our first great issue as "outside" citizens. They'll say *that's* the crisis. For a while, at least, we'll say no—we've heard of other dangers. We've heard of the begging going on for great, spontaneous, creative ways to lead us into a solution for the world crisis. But we won't relinquish our soft bed: getting a new car every two years, the many little luxuries that make a recession seem painful. We've heard the anguished cry for unique statesmen as well as for scientists. Yet we go out to the job that will best stop the economic recession. How long can we get away with living comfortably in the most uncomfortable times in history?

Our leader won't come now. He's too satisfied. We have to go back to unsatisfied times to get our moral base. The dark images of the equatorial belt will inherit the earth if we don't behave, for they are far enough away. They are our steps backward. The abstract artist today goes to them for aid in expressing the emotion of brutal times. There is the new (old) artist in us. Listen to us call this art phony. To live without luxury seems impossible. To fill up all our newly gained, long hours of leisure time seems impossible. To hide from the H-bomb seems impossible. To speak peace with Russia seems impossible. And these are the times. Even to go on as we are in an impossibility.

BUT IF we are to keep living, we will have to do the impossibilities. That's part of the character of our generation and, perhaps, all generations. We will have to get momentary solutions to these predicaments which defy solution. The church is eternal; science, also, defines its character of permanency. Man, in between, has his turn to say the same thing. But he is afraid it won't be done. Maybe he should admit that, and the solutions he finds for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his own life must last for a short time and then give way to the new man. College can do only so much, with its scheduled courses, in lighting such a dark path.

MORE than anything else, I don't want to die. It's too scary. I want to grow. Will I have to hold myself down now until solutions are found for me by someone else—soon enough only for a later generation? Will I cry about the economic recession, or about my own recession into graduate school or the safest possible job, while my spirit aches to be at one with the dangerous spirit of the times? It can be a time of the greatest possible living. The college has tried to focus our four years on the current specific needs, pleasures and values (whatever that word means) of society. It didn't trust us to do our own focusing. When I see that I have tried to write of the great issues I must blush, because I haven't even faced the issue of earning my own living for the first time. And I haven't wooed and won a girl yet. How can I talk of issues beyond these? I've heard in college; now I have to go out to see if I'm allowed to practice what I've heard.

What I've written is the result of the words and inspiration of a few men in Dartmouth. All the ideas are theirs (especially if there is anything good in this paper). I wrong them if I call these words mine or if I have misinterpreted them.

Something to be Brave About

Ronald M. Sohigian (Yale '58)

IF WE OF this younger generation —the one about to graduate from college—have done little else, we have at least incited a great many usually astute commentators to vilify us. We are called snide and frightened; silent, yet loud; cowardly, yet brash; self-confident, yet insecure; paralyzed with thought, yet irresponsibly active. Somebody, it seems, must be wrong. But those of us who might be tempted to disregard those impassioned critiques because they are so frequently contradictory, are stunned by the realization that almost all of them capture some of the truth.

Unlike our brothers and fathers, we are not the men who careen about Spain in a battered ambulance, or carry pearl-handled revolvers into battle against the Huns. In college we have seen this sort of action, based on political beliefs, regarded with intense disfavor. Our generation is one which views our behavioral sciences with relative boredom. The chairman of Harvard's Department of Government has pointed out that interest in political studies is declining among undergraduates. Daily we are harassed by dispatches from the countries of Southeast Asia which emphasize that the American solutions to most political problems might not permit of universal application. The diplomatic conference, whether at the noble summit or the lower snowline, seems to us, as we examine our memories, to be a useless relic from the days of the international minuets for political advantage. We have seen the world politics of our own day lurch from brink to brink—and we are not happy. Now that we are finally learning of Wilson's methods and mind, a new set of demons demands a new set of methods. We first saw the world during the days of economic collapse—the Depression. Our earliest memories are of diplomatic failures—the Second World War.

OUR interests now tend to center in different fields. We are experiencing a surge of fascination for the arts. In the past eight years, student subscription in Yale art history courses has doubled. Phonograph-record manufacturers are capitalizing on the enormous interest in good music. Tantalized by the New Critic, now a middle-aged and rather portly literary gentleman of the highest respectability, we study literature with a passion. Turn to the right of you and turn to the left of you; both neighbors want to be writers. At least, it seems so. Philosophy, religion, art and literature are now in the spotlight.

The enterprise which we abjure is group action by economic, political or sociological means. In college we are now thrilled by the artistic or philosophical attempts to bring order from chaos. All this sounds fine; it accomplishes a clever and accurate appraisal of our status. But it exposes a soft underbelly to our critics. If we are so interested in art and philosophy, intensely individual enterprises (for no great book has been written in committee), then why are we the most voracious consumers of advice in the memory of our admittedly over-critical elders? Even the salvation-mongers stress the horrifying solitude of the religious experience. Yet we yearn for togetherness and belonging. At Yale there is a completely conscientious and highly helpful service for student-job counseling, presumably to keep us from stubbing our toes. A very popular and creative young teacher, not so many years older than his students, curtly informed me that my generation annoyed him with its chicken-hearted pleas for guidance. "Why don't they go out and try something for themselves?" he snapped.

The siren song of voluptuous security penetrates into the most unlikely areas of our life. Campus organizations coax the gullible into their precincts by singing the tunes of economic prosperity and social popularity. As a mogul, they seem to say, you'll be accepted by most folks, and you'll be powerful enough to torture the few who still hate you.

With imagination and misguided industry, an undergraduate may earn an annual income in the five-figure magnitude by establishing a garment trust to sell cold-weather clothes to college students throughout the United States. The average teacher—poorly paid—and the average carpenter—well paid—should be pleased by this news. Or, as an enterprising college boy, one may peddle trips to exotic vacation spots. Success of this sort may arrive very early in life.

AND SO, if silent and uncertain young men, we are also paradoxical. On one hand, we renounce the ap-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

paratus of group action for the seemingly more attractive fields of individual attainment. On the other hand, we cling together and hustle for the same goals—money, acceptance and success. This paradox can be explained, to be sure. But can it be resolved? Is our new awareness of the arts simply an alibi for prolonged and gutless indecision? I am not sure about the final answers to this question. I can only suggest some notions and wait for time to make the ultimate decision.

In the field of politics, the birth of a new, literate and highly-skilled conservative philosophy has forced liberal political minds to re-examine the arguments for freedom. No longer can the conservative be dismissed with a chuckle. Now his every statement must be considered seriously. This sort of penetrating re-evaluation of basic political concepts has probably already set the stage for a new concentration on political theory which will probably supply young men for careers in government and international relations. We are painfully aware that however disenchanted we may be with our political past, the science of government in these times requires zeal and a dedication to fundamental principles. If we can resolve the dilemmas of governmental organization, we may be able to overcome the sense of estrangement from our own past by virtue of a greater awareness of the guiding ideals which have motivated men.

When we move into the world of commerce and the professions, we are at once disgusted by the frenzied activity on the treadmill and intimidated by the awesome implications of asserting our individuality. But most of us have a measure of self-confidence which enables us to breathe deeply and wait for the worst. We hope that our abilities will prove sufficient to bring us the sort of material security which will enable us to stop worrying about material security. It is probably safe to say that few of us are prepared to slit our throats if we are not worth a million dollars by 1968. But in concrete problems, we are unsure at what point personal integrity becomes martyr to success.

Thus even in the group situation, we direct our questions at our own individual problems with an almost morbid self-interest. When the critics call us the silent generation, they imply that we are hopeless recreants. Whether or not we are *different* from the young men of other generations is a question which hardly interests us, but we are offended when the representatives of older generations tell us that we are *worse.*

WE ARE unsure of our principles. Never has an age been so mercilessly taunted by more horrible threats. That bomb is not so clean after all. It breeds terror in us who must try to protect our children from its destruction. The absolute proposition of any kind is an object of narrow-eyed distrust. The folly of rigid dogmatism seems all too obvious to us.

The factor in our personalities which prevents us from making a quick run for the Spanish ambulances, however it may puzzle our adversaries, will probably be the factor which is most significant in our mature contribution to the frightening world. We are willing to commit ourselves to the defense and preservation of values when, and only when, we are convinced of their worth. We are not willing to race madly through escapade after escapade for the purpose of demonstrating our individuality. The axe is too sharp and too near for that. We are frightened, but we possess a courage of a hushed kind. It is the courage which searches quietly for something to be brave about.

The task before most of us involves the isolation, and acceptance, of certain values. We do not seek the message tightly bound in capsule form. Our tastes and sensibilities have been sharpened so that we are able to derive meaningful content from literature, art and philosophy. This is a kind of purification of our vision and, combined with the worldly sagacity which we exhibit with such maddening regularity, it may bestow great benefit upon us.

Our college days, especially at the Ivy League schools, which have officially rededicated themselves to the preservation of studies in the liberal arts, represents a new utilization of the basic stuff of education. We have been long unwilling to accept the synthetic concepts in which many others are only now losing faith—the perverse misapplication of John Dewey's educational theories, for example. Our typical approach uses the more fundamental disciplines of literature, art and philosophy as both ends in themselves, the most sublime luxuries we shall ever enjoy, and as a means to a better understanding of what courses of action we should follow. I have seen no fully-developed strain of anti-intellectualism in my own university. This is probably because we are too firmly pledged to the belief that the new vision will spring from our minds and not from our pockets. Occasionally men ignore the educational possibilities of the university, but even the undergraduate critics accept the basic premise that their remarks are directed at making the study of the liberal arts a more efficient pursuit.

I AM almost certain that most of us feel that in our own environment at Yale, education is reaching its highest development. We have valuable personal contact with our teachers and colleagues provided by the extraordinary system of residence colleges peculiar in America to Harvard and Yale. Both our teachers and our associates are of the highest caliber. We must admit that we do not know all that we would like to know. Most of us sense that whatever happens to us, the schools which have helped give us a knowledge of ourselves and an understanding of the world in which we live must be preserved and strengthened. If the more articulate members of our generation were heard, we would argue to double faculty salaries.

We feel that we are being neither stuffy nor presumptuous when we consider our responsibilities to ourselves and our fellows. The finest and most expensive educational care has been lavished upon us and we are now attempting to meet a higher and more frightening responsibility than we have ever known, the duty to become men who must recognize and accomplish their tasks.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE DURABLE Mr. STASSEN . . *by Dan Wakefield*

Butler, Pa.

THROUGH THE GRAY and overcast dusk of the small town of Butler in western Pennsylvania, a slowly moving caravan of cars, horses, cowboys and Indians wound its way, to the tunes of a teen-age fife and drum corps, along the quiet streets toward the junior high school. The cars bore stickers proclaiming that "Pennsylvania Needs Stassen" and the car at the front bore Stassen himself—a tall, broad-shouldered man once famous for his youth and famous now for his "durability."

Beaten many times but still on the road, Harold Stassen is stumping his way through Pennsylvania in a dogged quest for the promise of his youth and the Republican nomination for governor. Ever since mid-February, when he left his post of steadily diminishing powers as Eisenhower's special advisor on disarmament, Stassen has been campaigning hard for an upset victory in the May 20 primary over the state Republican organization. When he left the Administration with the President's polite assessment that his talents would be wasted in continuing on the job, Stassen was bloody from his last-minute battle to oust Richard Nixon from the Vice Presidential nomination in 1956, and his efforts to forge a disarmament policy under the armored wings of John Foster Dulles. He seemed to have nothing but a mild, though solid, endorsement from the President ("I have been most appreciative of your sincerity of purpose, tireless energy, and dedication to duty") and the fading memories of being Minnesota's three-time boy-wonder Governor. George I. Bloom, who as state Republican chairman for Pennsylvania is the overseer of a gutted plantation, greeted Stassen's ambitions for governor of the keystone state with the cold judgment that, "Anywhere I have had contact with Pennsylvania Republicans, I have found no sentiment for Harold Stassen." George I. Bloom is still committed to what seems to be a policy of going to hell in his own way, with his own cronies, but now in May his February claim of finding no sentiment for Stassen is long outdated.

When Stassen came last week to Butler, he had already criss-crossed the state several times in tours of speaking and handshaking, entered the homes of thousands of Pennsylvanians with a weekly television program, shaped up a broad and imaginative platform to cure the many ills of Pennsylvania (including a plan for improved commuter service in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh with the help of state and federal railroad subsidies), and earned the reported private rating of "the most formidable foe" for November by the Democratic organization gubernatorial candidate, Mayor David Lawrence of Pittsburgh.

THOUGH Stassen's role in the state has been limited to his tour of duty as president of Pennsylvania University (1948-52), his national reputation makes him a well-known figure here—much more well known than the other Republican gubernatorial hopefuls. William S. Livengood, billed as "the anti-organization candidate *who knows Pennsylvania,*" is a former state Secretary of Internal Affairs and a veteran Pennsylvania politician, and is said to have a substantial personal following in party ranks, though nothing like a groundswell backing. The man who is least well known and rated most likely to win is the candidate who has the support of the Pennsylvania Manufacturer's Association, and what is often thought of here as one of its subcommittees, the state Republican organization. Split by wrangles and slowed by defeat, the sputtering Republican machine decided it needed a "new face"—but one of its own—and came up with Arthur T. McGonigle, a gentleman whose fame had previously rested on the high achievement of "taking pretzels out of the bar and putting them into the kitchen." A Pennsylvania Horatio Alger, who took over a small pretzel manufacturing firm in the thirties and twisted his product into new shapes and new popularity, Arthur McGonigle became a big-time manufacturer and, briefly, head of the state Republican Finance Committee. But neither of those accomplishments had raised his name to a Pennsylvania byword.

McGonigle's forces had recently opened up local headquarters, serving sassafrass tea and pretzels, when Harold Stassen came to Butler, but the citizens left that lure unclaimed to follow the Stassen parade to the junior high school. Though Stassen has no state-wide group like the Pennsylvania Manufacturer's Association behind him, he is credited with scattered "pockets" of special support, and little Butler—population 24,000 — and its surrounding county is one of these pockets. Here, a small group of local Republican committeemen have bolted the ranks to go all out for Stassen. As one of them explained it, "The thing started at a party of some of us here in town, about a half-dozen couples, and it's spread from that. It's been rough, but if we can just get through the primary we can lick Dave Lawrence in November. More than one Democrat has been to me and said, 'If you fellas can get in Stassen we'll vote for him.' I tell you the truth, this county here is mainly Protestant and I don't think they'll go for Lawrence." (David Lawrence is a Catholic, and the state has never had a Catholic governor.)

Stassen is the hope of ending the state Republican drought which has hit even this traditionally G.O.P. county of farming and farm-manufacturing. "We have," the Stassen supporter sadly stated, "our first Democrat Mayor in twenty-eight years." The Butler Republican renegades, like many others throughout the state, see their only hope in Stassen, and the Butler *Eagle,* largest county newspaper, has come out supporting him.

Senator Pechan was the intro-

DAN WAKEFIELD is a staff contributor.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ductory speaker at the rally at the Butler junior high, where a crowd of about 400 filled the downstairs section of the auditorium. This is not an area inclined to the appeal of dissent, and Senator Pechan quickly explained his stand in breaking with the organization slate: "I've been a regular Republican all my life and I always intend to be one. But unless Stassen heads the ticket, we can't win in November. It's going to be hard to sell somebody with no experience in government to take over a twisted, pretzel-like government of Pennsylvania."

An experienced man was needed, Senator Pechan claimed, not only to end the Republican political famine but the growing famine of individuals all over Pennsylvania.

The famine had only recently begun to be felt in the town of Butler, where its coming was heralded officially by the red, white and blue posters of "Auto Buy Day" that decorated Main Street. The Armco plant, which employs about 4,000 people in Butler, had last week made the first big lay-off of about 700 workers, whose seniority dated as far back as 1951. Much of this trouble, Senator Pechan claimed, was due to the heavy taxes on Pennsylvania industry imposed by the Democrats.

"If any man can help Pennsylvania industry," Senator Pechan said, "it is Harold Stassen."

THE MAN TO perform such a feat was there on the stage, and the audience rose in applause as he stepped to the podium. Back from the capitals of the world and conferences with the mighty of the earth, here was Harold Stassen again in a junior high school auditorium facing an audience not much different from the ones he faced in Minnesota when he stumped his way to the governorship at the unlikely age of thirty-one. Here it was two decades, two wars and many defeats later, and Harold Stassen's retreating crop of hair was gray at the edges and his face a pasty hue unknown to farmers, but familiar to those who have mashed out many cigarettes in many all-night sessions of decision. Here he was again, as he was at the beginning, waging a fight against the old-guard Republican leadership in a state where the G.O.P. had once been strong and now was parched from years of defeat, at a time when many men were out of jobs and many more were afraid they would be soon. Nothing had changed much except the name of the junior high school and the face of Harold Stassen, which is not any longer the face of a "Childe."

Harold Stassen

Stassen's big frame was dressed in a black, double-breasted suit, a dark tie and black shoes and socks. He spoke in a deep, clear voice of confidence, beginning his story at the beginning—"As a young man on a farm in Minnesota I decided to devote my life to public service"—and his huge hands, which first were locked together in front of him, began to move, gesturing, lightly touching the edge of the speaker's stand the way a musician's hands touch his instrument, rising for emphasis, leading the crowd with his thoughts. He led them along the story that described the decline of their commonwealth, and what he would do to stop that decline:

> We live together in one of the five great states of the union—the others are California, Texas, Ohio and New York. . . . In recent times, Pennsylvania has had a deeper unemployment problem than any of these. Pennsylvania puts a heavier tax than any of the others on industry. . . . Our Pennsylvania has less growth than any of these states in new plants.

The policy of putting heavier taxes on industry and less on the people might sound good to the working man, Mr. Stassen said, but in the end it led to unemployment. Mr. Stassen said he would, if governor, reduce taxes on industry, and send his lieutenant governor, Frank Hilton, to Washington to lobby for Pennsylvania business. He went on to tell how he would modernize and economize the state government, which he said hadn't been brought up to date since 1874; how he would expand state scholarships "not on a giveaway basis" but to be paid back later on; encourage and aid young men of scientific talent, and improve the state's conservation program; he would stock the barren streams with fish. And at the same time, with his experience in working for peace, he would use the power of the governorship to promote this goal.

None of his opponents, Mr. Stassen pointed out, had impugned his record or ability, but only the fact that he was not a native Pennsylvanian. He frankly admitted to the charge: "It's true. I've never denied it. There's nothing I can do about it." He went on to say that he had officially been a resident for ten years, and that after all there were other Pennsylvania governors who hadn't been natives of the state—for instance, Benjamin Franklin from Massachusetts. Furthermore, to add to the poetic justice of his cause, the first governor of Minnesota was Alexander Ramsey from Pennsylvania. And as for the matter of being governor of two different states in one lifetime, look at Sam Houston, who held the job in Tennessee and then in Texas. Harold Stassen ended his case with this lesson in history, and turned things over to Frank Hilton, former state and national president of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and now Stassen's running mate for lieutenant governor.

Frank Hilton, who had shown up late, was a lantern-jawed young fellow in a light gray suit,blue shirt and maroon tie, and looked like a used-car king who had just come in to encourage the people to do their all during "Auto Buy Day." But instead Frank Hilton recited the sad statistics of the recent Republican decline in the state: four years

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ago there were a million more Republicans registered than Democrats, and now the margin had dwindled to 200,000. While Ike was piling up a 600,000 vote victory margin in Pennsylvania in 1956, the Republican candidate for Senator, the incumbent James H. Duff, was losing to Democrat Joe Clark by 20,000. Now those Republican organization forces of defeat were opposing Harold Stassen, supposedly on the grounds that he was a "carpetbagger" from out of state. But, as Mr. Hilton somewhat ineptly pointed out, "These same men supported *another* carpetbagger—Tom Dewey —in New York."

The "carpetbagger" sitting on the platform stared at his hands and soon the oratory was over and he was hurrying up the aisle like a minister after the service to greet the people as they filed outside. Stassen stood at the entrance, pumping hands and smiling. There was warmth, but more than that there was dignity and he seemed, finally, detached and almost aloof from the citizens who swirled around him. It would be only a few more weeks and he would know if he might have a chance to be leading one of the key state delegations to the 1960 Republican convention, or whether this latest campaign was in vain and he again would be left with the memory of having in his youth been "the one most likely to succeed." The last of the audience drifted out, and the red-faced, crew-cut county chairman came up to Stassen to say that they might drop by to say a few words at the Policeman's Ball and then go to greet some people at campaign headquarters. Harold Stassen looked down and nodded and then he was moving swiftly, out of the junior high school corridor, on to his future, which now is so dependent on his power to stir the assembled couples who have come to the Policeman's Ball.

THIS RECESSION IS DIFFERENT . . *Gardiner C. Means*

SINCE WORLD WAR II there have been three serious departures from full employment: the recession of 1949, the recession of 1953-54, and the current recession which is already assuming the proportions and character of a depression. What caused these recessions? Are they alike? Could they have been prevented? What should be done about the current recession? And what about inflation?

Perhaps the most effective way to answer these questions is to trace the changing relations between demand and capacity since the war and to seek the explanation of the causes and effects of these changes.

The Tools of Analysis

LET US first be sure just what we mean by demand and capacity. For the present purpose, "demand" is what economists call "aggregate demand," and includes consumer demand for goods and services, business demand for plant and equipment as well as inventories, government demand, and net foreign demand. By "capacity," we will mean the amount of goods and services the economy can turn out at full employment. And since capacity changes fairly gradually and steadily with the growth in the labor force, and with increasing productivity, we can treat it as a fairly stable trend around which demand fluctuates. Thus our analysis can focus on fluctuation in demand.

In this analysis there are two conceptions of prime importance which need to be explained. The first is the demand for money, or more explicitly, the demand for cash balances. This is not the demand for credit—for money to borrow—but rather reflects the desire to have money on hand. At any given time individuals and enterprises find it convenient to hold certain amounts of cash on hand, either in the form of hand-to-hand currency or in demand deposits in the bank.

Experience has shown that at least three major factors influence the amount of money people choose to hold. At a given level of prices, people will want to hold more money if incomes are high than if they are low; they will want to hold more if real incomes—incomes measured in terms of buying power—are the same but money income and prices are higher; and they will want to hold more if short-term interest rates are low (this is particularly true of business and investors). There are many other factors which influence the amount of money people will want to hold, such as greater or lesser certainty as to the future, larger or smaller holdings of other liquid assets, particular opportunities for investment, and unexpected receipts of money. But for the present analysis, the factors of real income, prices and short-term interest rates have a special significance.

This significance arises from the fact that for the economy as a whole, economic relationships must continually adjust so that the amount of money people want to hold is just equal to the outstanding supply of money. An individual can add to or reduce his money holdings with no difficulty, but as long as the total money supply remains constant the community as a whole cannot. For each person or business that reduces money holdings, others must hold an increased amount. And if some *want* to reduce money holdings, and

---

GARDINER C. MEANS has held various government, economic and fiscal posts, was formerly associate director of research and consultant for the Committee for Economic Development and is now consultant to the Fund for the Republic. He is co-author with Adolf A. Berle of The Modern Corporation and Private Property.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

no one wants to increase their money holdings at the current level of incomes, prices, interest rates, etc., something has to give. It is a little like the gyroscope. You try to push it away and it moves to the side. If the community as a whole seeks to reduce its money holdings and there is no shrinkage in the money supply, the main effect is likely to be one or a combination of the following: higher real incomes, higher prices and lower interest rates. Similarly, if the community as a whole seeks to build up money balances when there is no increase in the supply of money, the gyroscopic effect will work itself out primarily through lower real incomes and lower prices. Here we have a *principle of forced adjustment* under which the economy must so adjust that the demand for money balances just equals the outstanding supply.

The second conception fundamental to this analysis is the distinction between market prices and administered prices. Market prices are established in the market by the interaction of buyers and sellers, are highly sensitive to changes in supply or demand, and adjust so as to equate supply and demand. Examples are wheat, cotton, copper and steel scrap. Administered prices are set for periods of time and a series of transactions, and are not highly sensitive—in fact, many are quite insensitive — to changes in supply and demand. As a result, the amount of a commodity offered at an administered price may be very much in excess of the demand at that price; similarly, demand may be very much in excess of supply and orders may be turned away or their filling postponed. The continuous equating of supply and demand through price, posited in traditional economics, is lacking.

In our actual economy, the great bulk of industrial goods and most services are sold at administered prices. Most wage rates also are a form of administered price, since they are usually set by collective bargaining or by the employer. Only for agricultural products and such industrial raw materials as steel scrap, copper and rubber are prices made in the market. In the analysis which follows, the difference in the behavior of market and administered prices is of just as great significance as the principle of forced adjustment.

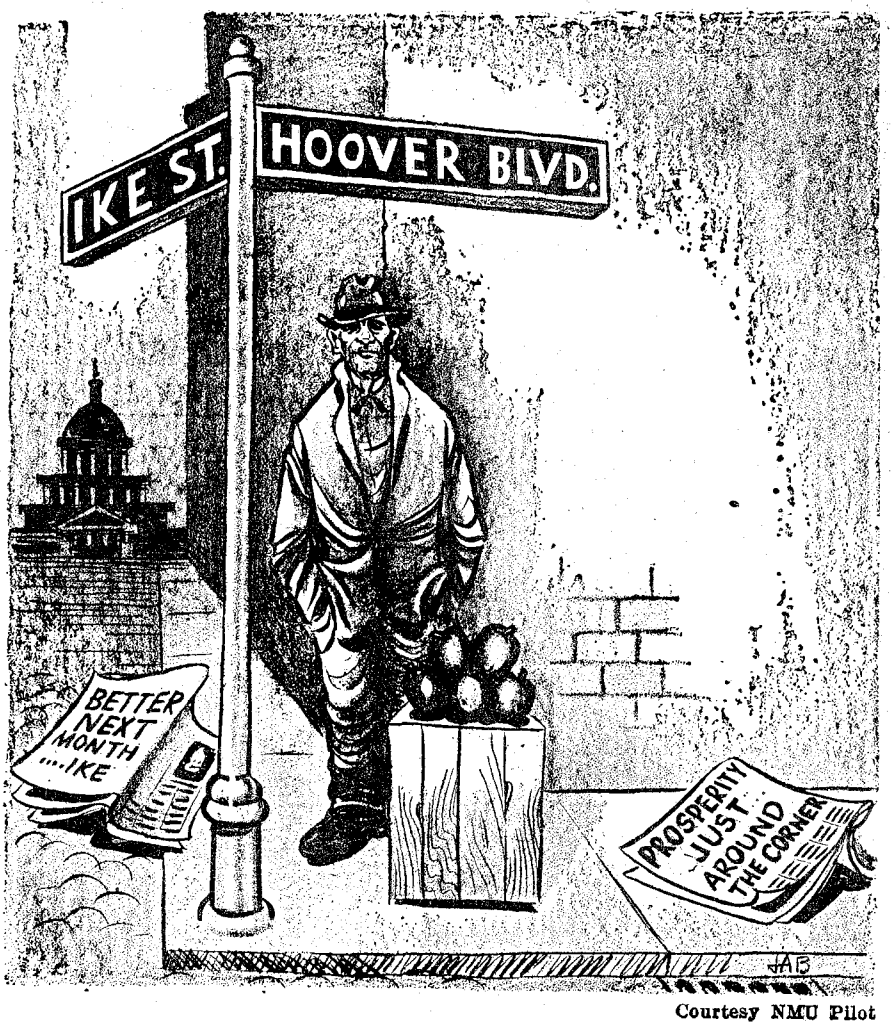
With this sharpening of the tools of analysis, let us examine the fluctuations in postwar demand.

Postwar Period: Too Much Money

AT THE END of World War II, two major factors combined to create a demand in excess of capacity: (1) the pent-up demand which could not be satisfied during the war, and (2) the huge wartime increase in the money supply. The pent-up demand for goods was well understood, but the significance of the increase in money supply was not. Some observers recognized that the pent-up demand was backed by large holdings of cash and so could be made effective, but somehow assumed that once the extra cash was spent that would be the end of it. As we have seen, this is not the case; the extra cash is still there to affect behavior. Other observers, and particularly the "Keynesians," thought the increase in money supply would have little effect and predicted great postwar unemployment. Actually, the stock of money created by war financing was far in excess of the amount the community would choose to hold for long at the then prevailing levels of real income, prices and interest rates, an excess which was presumedly increased by the large stock of other liquid assets. The principle of forced adjustment therefore came into play.

Under the pressure of pent-up demand and excess money, the economy worked at forced draft. Employment was over-full, if anything, unemployment remaining below two million through most of 1946, '47 and '48. Prices rose and short-term interest rates were at minimum levels. As long as the money supply was not reduced, the money excess had to work itself out according to the principle of forced adjustment.

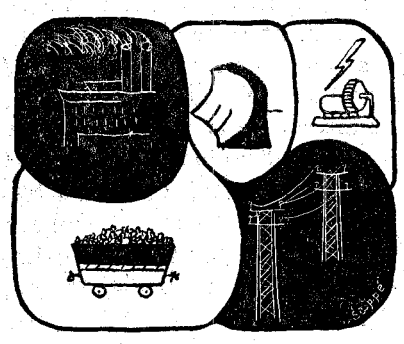
Under these conditions government policy was in part constructive



Courtesy NMU Pilot

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and in part failed to meet the issue of inflation. Government expenditures were curtailed sharply while tax rates were maintained and a surplus created, thus shrinking aggregate demand to some degree. But instead of using the surplus to reduce the money supply, it was used to retire debt in the hands of the public while the money supply was maintained constant. Thus the supply of money continued to be in excess. Whether political considerations would have allowed a drastic cut in the money supply is open to question. But because of the failure to shrink the money supply, the principle of forced adjustment was given full sway and the economy had to adjust to the money supply rather than the other way around.



The adjustment actually occurred over a three-year period. It was slowed up by the presence of the large body of administered price and wage rates. When price controls were removed in 1946, market prices rose rapidly, reflecting the high demand, and reached a peak in mid-1948. Administered prices, in contrast, rose slowly, as did administered wage rates. Neither administered prices nor wage rates were pushed to the full extent the traffic would bear. For example, auto prices were not raised to the extent necessary to equate supply and demand, and long waiting lists developed. Similarly, in the light of the demand for goods, the wage demands of labor were quite moderate. As a result of this restraint, or the inflexibility of administered prices and wage rates, it took three years of price-wage—wage-price spiraling to lift prices and wage rates into balance with the money supply.

The final phase of the price rise had a very special character. The *average* of wholesale prices came into balance with the money supply. But market prices as a group had moved up almost half again as much as administered prices, so that when the money-price balance was reached in early 1948, market prices had overshot the mark while administered prices continued to move up. Thus during most of 1948, though the wholesale price index was fairly stable, market prices were declining and administered prices continued to rise until both groups were in approximate balance with the money supply.

By the middle of 1948, the forced adjustment to the money supply appears to have been in large measure complete. The wholesale price index had risen nearly 50 per cent and the consumer price index had risen almost as much. Employment was still full, but no longer over-full, and short-term interest rates, though still low, had risen slightly. The price level at full employment was at last in approximate balance with the money supply and demand was in balance with capacity.

1949 Recession—and Korea

THEN CAME THE 1949 recession. It was almost entirely an inventory readjustment. During the forced draft of inflation, the expectation of higher prices was a constant inducement to hold over-large inventories. When this inducement disappeared, inventories were found to be too large in relation to the volume of business at full employment. The total reversal of inventories was from an accumulation at the annual rate of over $7 billion in the last quarter of 1948 to contraction at the annual rate of over $4 billion in the second quarter of 1949. At the same time there was relatively little change in the other elements of aggregate demand. Real consumer expenditures continued to rise, while a rise in government expenditures more than offset a billion-dollar decline in exports and a somewhat larger decline in business investments other than inventories. In the first six months of the 1949 recession, real national production fell below the normal growth trend by only a little more than the amount of the inventory reduction. Also, almost as soon as inventories were brought down to more normal relation to sales, production and employment began to recover so that, by June, 1950, industrial production was already appreciably above its postwar peak and employment was back to the pre-recession level, though unemployment had increased by the amount of the normal increase in the labor force.

Then the Korean War created a great surge of speculative buying which, combined with the projected heavy increase in military spending and some further monetary expansion, again created a demand seriously in excess of capacity. Prices again rose, reaching a wholesale peak within eight months of the start of the war, but with only a fifth as large a rise as in the earlier inflation. This time, as before, the market prices as a group rose much more rapidly than the administered prices as a group, so that when the wholesale price peak was reached, though balance was achieved with the money supply, market prices as a group were above the balanced level and administered prices as a group were below. During the rest of 1951, market prices fell and administered prices rose so that both were well toward balance with the money supply at the end of the year, though market prices were on the high side and still falling, while administered prices were on the low side and still rising somewhat.

Once this new monetary balance and relative price stability had been achieved, there appeared to be nothing in the economic situation as it existed which would lead to either inflation or recession. The war inflations were over and no factor was visible which could be expected either to force an expansion in the money supply greater than the long-run growth trend, or to force a contraction. The peak of the government deficit from financing the Korean War was past and some curtailment of defense expenditures could be expected, though total government expenditures would remain high and the cut would presumably be offset in part by tax reduction. The cessation of the Korean inflation had passed without an inventory recession,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

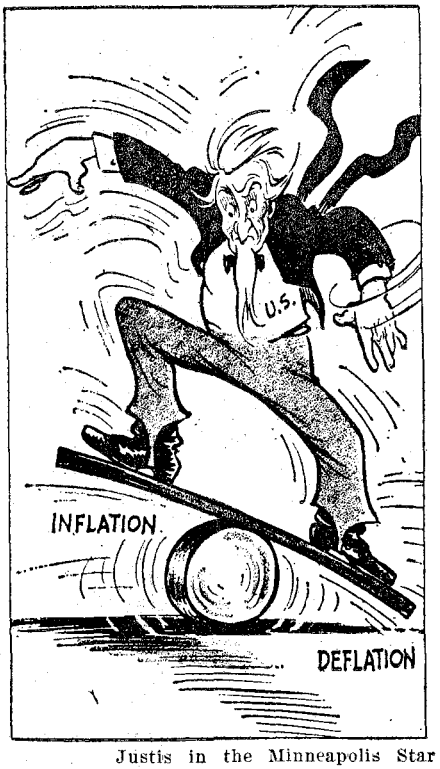
presumably because of its smaller magnitude. The problem of readjustment which arose as the Korean War was brought to a close was taken in stride, so that things were still on an even keel in the summer of 1953. There were fewer than two million unemployed.

The Inflation That Wasn't There

THEN DURING the last four months of 1953, industrial production dropped sharply and unemployment, after seasonal adjustment, increased rapidly to over 3.5 million by mid-March, 1954.

The explanation most frequently suggested as the main cause for this recession is the $10 billion cut in defense expenditures. This certainly contributed, but most of the cut came after 1953; total government expenditures, including state and local, were maintained right through that year. True, the *expectation* of defense cuts could have a foreshadowing effect, but so could—as partial offset — the expectation of tax cuts. Net foreign investment was rising and there was no decline in exports. The main contraction came first in consumer expenditures for both non-durable and durable goods, followed by a contraction of inventories. The growth in real consumer expenditures slackened off in the summer of 1953, turning into a significant decline in the fall. By the end of the first six months of the recession the annual rate of consumer expenditure on goods had declined from trend by six or eight billion dollars and consumers were spending a smaller proportion of their incomes. Why this contraction?

To answer this, I believe we must go back to the proclaimed policies of the new Administration which took office at the beginning of 1953. Stopping inflation was one of the major planks on which election had been sought. This plank had great political appeal because of the post-war and Korean inflations. Little attention was given to the fact that inflation had ceased, that at the time of the election the wholesale price index had been falling for five months and was down more than 5 per cent from its peak, while the consumer index had ceased to rise. The campaign promise was to stop inflation and, once in office, the Administration took steps *to stop the inflation that wasn't there.*



Justis in the Minneapolis Star
"Rock 'n Roll"

Now the traditional inflation is a price rise due to too much money chasing too few goods, and the traditional procedure for control is to reduce demand by a tight-money policy. This was the policy the Administration adopted. The Secretary of the Treasury spoke for higher interest rates, the Federal Reserve discount rates were raised, net new borrowing from commercial banks was brought to a halt and the trend of expansion in the money supply, which is normally necessary for economic growth, came to an end. It was a program well designed to halt an inflation due to excess demand; but since there was no current inflation, and demand was not currently in excess of capacity, the net effect was to create a deficiency of demand and unemployment. When one examines charts of long- and short-term interest rates, the artificiality of this tight-money policy is obvious in retrospect, and it was so regarded at the time by many economists, including the present writer.

Actually it took nearly six months of tight money to start demand downward. The delay is easily understood when it is recognized that (1) the decline from trend in the money supply was gradual, taking six months to reach a deficit from trend of 2.5 per cent, and (2) the demand for cash balances was presumably reduced somewhat by higher short-term interest rates. When, at the end of six months, the tight-money policy was reversed and interest rates fell, the deficiency in the money supply remained. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that a decline in demand occurred. Nor is it surprising that the first signs of this decline appeared in consumer non-durable expenditures, then spread to consumers' durable goods, business inventories and, finally, to business investment. Other factors, such as reduced government spending, contributed to this decline, but there is no reason to believe that the tight-money program, which aimed to contract demand, was unsuccessful.

1955-56: Capital Boom

THE RECOVERY program of 1954 was slow to take effect, but by fall recovery was well under way under the lead of residential housing and the stimulation of reduced taxes, lower interest rates and an expanding money supply. Then, in mid-1955, there began a surge of business investment coinciding with an unusual demand for autos. This brought almost complete recovery (unemployment was still fluctuating around 2.5 million) and while there was no *general* excess of demand, the special focus on construction, durable equipment and automobiles did create an excessive demand in the heavy industries and a heavy demand for the use of savings. The savings were used particularly to finance expanded business plant and equipment, residential housing and auto purchases.

As a result of this demand, there began a rise in the administered prices for metal products and the market prices for such metals as copper and steel scrap. In these circumstances, a tighter money policy was called for, not to curtail *aggregate* demand, but to allow interest rates to rise so as to dampen the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

demand for investment funds and to stimulate savings. At the same time, the resulting increase in interest rates would reduce the demand for money balances and so would require a limit on monetary expansion. Here the Administration acted in an appropriate way to tighten credit with successive increases in discount rates and an almost complete cessation of monetary expansion.

By the fall of 1956, this special pressure had largely subsided. Under the impact of tight money, new contracts for residential housing had declined substantially; contracts for other new construction were down *in real terms,* though the dollar value was stable. New orders for equipment in *real terms* were down substantially. Auto sales were much lower. Also, business was in a position to finance a much larger part of its new investment out of retained earnings. There was no evidence of general over-employment or excess of demand. At this point, so far as *demand* was concerned, a relaxation of tight-money policy was called for, so that the general trend of growth in the money supply could be resumed. But prices were still rising in the heavy-goods industries and the rise was spreading to the products of other administered-price industries. How could there be rising prices and yet not an excess of demand?

Administrative Inflation

LET US LOOK at what was happening to prices in the latter part of 1956 and early 1957. Market prices as a whole were declining. Farm products, after a temporary dip and recovery in the fall and winter of 1955-56, were lower than they had been in the spring of 1955, and appreciably lower than in previous years. Other market prices, such as rubber, copper, lumber and print cloth, were down substantially. On the other hand, administered prices as a group were still rising. Because of the large role played by administered prices in the general price indexes, both the wholesale and consumer indexes continued to rise. But for the most part, it should be emphasized, this rise was among administered prices and was not due to an excess in demand. Elsewhere I have referred to this as an administrative inflation.

The cause of the phenomenon is complex. Businessmen tend to lay the blame on labor for excessive wage demands. Labor blames business for seeking too large profit margins. In any concrete situation it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to say whether a particular price increase is necessary to widen profit margins that have been too much narrowed by previous wage increases, or whether a wage increase is necessary to narrow profit margins that have been too much widened by a previous price increase. Or perhaps both price and wage increases are an adjustment to price or wage changes elsewhere in the economy. Certainly there is a lot of hen and egg in an administrative inflation, and fortunately we do not need to settle the issue here. What is important is (1) that the inflation of late 1956, which continued through the whole of last year, has been primarily administrative and not the traditional kind due to an excess of demand, and (2) an administrative inflation, not being due to excess demand, cannot be halted by contracting demand except by creating heavy unemployment.

The Current Recession

THE ADMINISTRATION, seeing this continued rise in the price indexes and mindful of its campaign promises, continued the tight-money policy after the special excess in the demand for investment funds had ceased. The effect was to prevent any significant growth in the money supply (in effect, a "real" contraction because of the increase in prices). By the spring of 1957, real economic growth appears to have ceased, but administrative inflation continued. Since prices continued to rise, the money policy was more forcefully tightened. The discount rate was again raised in August, 1957, and an actual contraction in the money supply was forced. By early fall a recession was well under way. Again, a policy aimed at curtailing demand had been eminently successful. That there was no initial excess of demand makes the policy a mistake, not a failure. And its mistaken character points the direction toward recovery.

Up to last fall or early winter, I believe it would have been a relatively simple matter to reverse the downward trend in demand by (1) reversing the tight-money policy and (2) taking active steps to expand the money supply. But with each month of delay the recession has gathered momentum. The tight-money policy was not reversed until November, 1957; moreover, the reverse was half-hearted and has had little effect on the money supply. The Administration has resisted serious attempts to expand government spending; it has merely filled the press with figures on big spending which, on analysis, have little substance as recovery influences. Instead of taking vigorous action, it seeks recovery around each statistical corner. While unemployment other than agricultural has increased month by month, the Administration hails the seasonal increase in farm workers and in construction as signs that the recession is coming to an end.

The figures for April, which usually show a substantial reduction, this year show only a small decline. This represents, in effect, a substantial increase in unemployment, a continuance of the upward trend. In this kind of atmosphere, all too reminiscent of the Hoover days, vigorous action will be required to overcome the momentum of recession. The loss in national production has already reached the cumulated magnitude of $12 billion, and we are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

now running some 8 or 10 per cent below capacity.

Actually, there seems to be little in the current situation which will automatically produce a recovery. In 1949, the inventory recession was largely self-correcting. In 1954, tax inducements to business, booming automobile sales and a $6 billion monetary expansion produced recovery, but with excessive emphasis on capital and durable goods. However, the present recession is not an inventory readjustment and no measures have been taken of significant magnitude to add to demand directly, or to add to it indirectly by increasing the money supply.

The Way to Recovery

THE FIRST thing to recognize, in seeking recovery, is that the money supply today is in the magnitude of perhaps $6 or $8 billion under the amount which the people and enterprises of the country in the aggregate would choose to hold as cash balances at the present level of prices and interest rates if there were full employment.

But to correct this deficiency is not a simple matter. The *process* of expanding the money supply has effects on behavior as well as the *amount outstanding*. The combination of low interest rates and reduced reserve requirements alone is likely to be a painfully slow method of getting the necessary monetary expansion. These make it *easier* for the commercial banks to expand their loans and investments, but they don't necessarily lead them to do so, or to do so at the requisite rate. It has often been pointed out, in this connection, that "you can't push a string." The recent easing of money rates and reserves is constructive, but is not likely to produce a rapid expansion in the money supply. Meanwhile the lower short-term interest rates have a somewhat offsetting effect by increasing the total demand for cash balances.

A government program of public works would provide additional jobs and could be used to increase the money supply, but such a program would also be slow in having its effect. Despite this, any public works which are justified quite apart from the depression should be instituted or speeded up. But public works used as recovery measures may produce the bulk of their effect after recovery has been achieved. The same would apply to defense expenditure.

A government deficit as such can contribute to recovery, but it is also likely to be slow in its effect, particularly if it is financed by borrowing from the public. In fact, insofar as the deficit is a product of reduced revenues *and is not financed by monetary expansion,* its effect is likely to be little more than a damper on recession rather than a positive influence for recovery. If the deficit is financed by monetary expansion, then it can have a positive recovery effect, but only a slow one, paced by the gradual building up of the monetary supply.

What is needed, then, is a quick, large government deficit financed by monetary expansion. The most effective measure would be a very temporary tax cut in a form that would be quickly spent, financed by the sale of government debt to the banking system.

I believe the most effective temporary tax cut would be a three-month forgiveness of the first bracket of the personal-income tax. This would mean that the 20 per cent on the first $4,000 of taxable income of a married couple ($2,000 for a single person) which is now withheld, or paid, would be skipped for three months. For most people, this would mean an immediate increase in take-home pay. For a family of four with a $7,000 income, it would mean something like $200—about $15 a week—more to spend in the three months. For the country as a whole, it would mean an increase in spendable income of $5 billion, or an annual rate of $20 billion.

The monetary financing of this $5 billion deficit could be negotiated directly with the banking system, or securities could be sold into the market, in which case the appropriate open-market operation of the Federal Reserve Banks and purchases by commercial banks would suffice. The direct negotiation might be preferable, because it would emphasize the dual character of the move—*temporary tax reduction as a means to effect a quick monetary expansion.*

It is important to note that the monetary expansion is an essential part of this prescription. A three-month reduction in taxes without monetary expansion would give only a temporary fillip to demand, much like the effect of the Soldiers' Bonus in the mid-thirties. Only if it is accompanied by an increase in the money supply will it have a continuing effect.

A recovery program combining a temporary tax reduction with monetary expansion would probably produce recovery with a much smaller total deficit than public works or other slower measures not accompanied by monetary expansion. The effect on employment, profits and taxable incomes should be rapid, and after the three months were up, there would be every reason to expect a net increase in government revenue. The total federal deficit for fiscal 1959 might be appreciably lower than if no action, or only slowly operating action, were taken.

It has been suggested that taxes on corporate profits should be temporarily reduced as a part of the temporary tax-reduction program. While such a reduction might have some constructive effect, it seems likely to be much less effective than the same dollar reduction in personal-income taxes. A *permanent* reduction in corporate taxes could have a considerable effect by increasing profit expectations over the life of additional investments. But a temporary three-month reduction would not alter long-run investment expectations. While it would add cash to the fund available to business, it might lead primarily to the holding of larger cash balances, and not to increased business investment except as consumer demand increased. Furthermore, as consumer purchases increased under the stimulus of a personal-income tax reduction, and business investment was thereby made more profitable, business borrowing from the banking system could be expected to increase, thus helping to expand the money supply further. To the extent that business

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

expands the money supply through extra bank borrowing, the amount of expansion required by deficit financing would be less.

Once the initial turn-around and sizable expansion have been instituted by a three-month injection of effective buying power, I believe monetary action alone could be sufficient to bring about and sustain stable full employment—provided no further efforts are made to halt non-existent or non-monetary inflation by a tight-money policy.

What About Inflation?

THERE STILL remains, however, the problem of inflation. In fact, there are two problems: (1) a rise in market prices as recovery and full employment are achieved and (2) the possibility of an administrative inflation after full recovery.

The rise of market prices in recovery is implicit in the recession. With increased demand, the prices for such market-priced commodities as scrap iron, copper, rubber and steel scrap, as well as the flexible farm prices, are likely to rise. True, some farm prices have risen recently because of frosts and other temporary restrictions on supply, and these prices are likely to fall (or fail to rise with recovery) as supplies become more normal. But on the whole, market prices are likely to be somewhat higher, thus raising the indexes above their present levels. Because this market-price rise is implicit in recovery, it should be accepted as working toward a better balance in the price structure, and no action against it should be taken. It is neither inflation from an excess of demand, nor is it administrative inflation.

Administrative inflation is a different problem. Whether, after recovery, a price-wage — wage-price spiral develops remains to be seen. It should now be clear that such an administrative inflation cannot be controlled through contracting demand, except at the cost of heavy unemployment. The controlling of administrative inflation should be the next order of business, once capacity operation has been reestablished.

PERSPECTIVE ON THE PRESS

Scoops by TIME and NEWSWEEK . . *by Fred J. Cook*

ONE CAN HARDLY grow to maturity without becoming aware that things are not always what they seem, but one can be quite mature and still not realize how often things can be made to seem what they are not. It takes the so-called weekly news magazines, in a week of high endeavor, to call attention to this phenomenon by making the news stand on its head.

The first week of May was such a week. It was a week when the recession obstinately refused to go away and get lost as any amenable recession should do in the springtime when employment just naturally mounts; it was a week filled with more angry trumpetings in foreign affairs and the increasing likelihood that the much-discussed summit meeting may not even get to a foothill stage; it was a week filled with dire forebodings about the President's Pentagon reorganization bill, which some critics saw as opening the door to the Man on Horseback. Yet for the readers of *Newsweek* and *Time,* it was a jolly week filled with the glow of traditional virtues — good old-fashioned Americanism, a fighting Ike and the appealing image of waiting Dick Nixon.

Perhaps the simplest entrance into this never-never land of the news magazines is *Newsweek's* lead item, which carried the headline, "Why Ike's Temper Showed." Readers of the daily press, of whom there are probably some still around, may recall that at the President's press conference of April 23, things had not gone smoothly. In fact Ike, who had led a charmed news life throughout his first term, was badgered by some unseemly questions. Reporters wanted to know about his Pentagon reorganization plan, and one even asked what he was buying in fulfillment of his earlier advice to all good Americans to buy now until it hurts. Ike didn't take kindly to the tenor of the questions. In a word, he blew.

Casual readers of the press may have gotten the idea that he was angry because things weren't going smoothly at home or abroad; some uncharitable souls may even have formed the impression that Ike couldn't take the needling with the charm and grace he had exhibited in the easy atmosphere of the past. If so, if there are truly any such, it is good that *Newsweek* is here to set them straight.

Newsweek's inside poop may be summed up in one line: Ike's temper goes to show that *things couldn't be better.*

Newsweek lays the foundation by pointing out that, in World War II, when Ike was the Great General, he was noted for an ability to "blow off like a Regular Army Sergeant dressing down a raw recruit." *Newsweek* then explains that the Presidential press conferences for some time now have been graced by a busybody of a newspaper woman from Texas named Sarah McClendon. Miss McClendon, says *Newsweek,* "is forever asking questions," and what's more, says *Newsweek,* she is "forever looking for a 'Texas angle' to whatever subject is under discussion. . . ." Not knowing Miss McClendon, we were tempted to believe that she belongs to a noble and vanishing breed—reporters who

---

FRED J. COOK, on the staff of a New York metropolitan newspaper, is a frequent contributor to these columns and the author of the just-published The Unfinished Story of Alger Hiss.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ask questions about matters of concern to their readers—but *Newsweek* promptly set us straight about press conference decorum. Ike, it says, had been a bit "baffled" by her questions at first, but then they usually "amused him."

Amusement ended abruptly when Miss McClendon mentioned that Pentagon reorganization bill. To this, even *Newsweek* agrees, Ike snapped at the lady and asked if she had read the bill. When she said she had, Ike snapped again and took leave to doubt it. Then, says *Newsweek,* agreeing with the general press version, the President gave the unfortunate Miss McClendon "a parade-ground dressing-down." After it was all over, reporters wondered among themselves what had caused the pop-off. Well, only *Newsweek* knows.

"Intimates of the President laughed," said *Newsweek*. "Far from being a sign that his job was getting him down, they said, the press-conference blowoff was an indication that Mr. Eisenhower felt genuinely confident about the Administration's ability to handle problems facing the nation. Mr. Eisenhower, they said, hasn't felt better since before his first illness. He's always more inclined to snap back at someone he thinks is silly when he feels well than when he's down at the mouth, they said. . . ."

THIS twister quite takes the pep-pill-of-the-week guerdon away from *Time,* no mean accomplishment. But *Time* got in a few of its own licks at the news. For *Time,* the top news of the week wasn't to be found in anything you may have thought of as the top news of the week. No, indeed. For *Time,* the big news was U.S. Law Day, designed to take the steam out of the Communists' traditional May Day observance.

The lead item of *Time* and four inside pages were devoted to what you and I, in our ignorance, may not have considered exactly a world-shaking event. "Between May Day, U.S.S.R., and May Day, U.S.A., lies the difference between those who use laws as instruments for force and those who believe in the force of law to bring order and decency to human endeavor; the difference is one of the outlaw and the lawful," *Time* proclaimed in an outburst of reporting.

It went on to devote a full page to a profile of Charles Rhyne, youngest president in the history of the American Bar Association. When Rhyne talks about Law Day, says *Time,* "he loses the leisurely North Carolina cadence of his speech; his brown eyes glint behind plastic-rimmed glasses; he clenches his fist, and his knuckles turn white." This is very serious business to Mr. Rhyne and *Time.*

HAVING filled its readers' minds with the image of a man standing four-square on the battlements, *Time* throws into the profile one of those charming irrelevancies, without which one might have trouble separating the heroes from the villains. *Time* notes that Rhyne worked his way through college and then, in parentheses, as only *Time* can, it adds "(one classmate: a young Californian named Richard Nixon)."

This young Californian, one gathers, is quite a favorite at *Time*. Second only to U.S. Law Day in *Time's* chronicle of the momentous events of the First of May was the fact that this young Californian "made the most sense about the U.S. economy last week" and "gave the body-economic a couple of solid thumps." You may not have felt the solid thumps, especially if you used to be an auto worker in Detroit, but take it from *Time,* Dick Nixon was thumping away like Sir Galahad.

The occasion, one finds reading further in *Time,* was the convention of the American Newspaper Publishers Association in New York, and the thumping, actually, all took place in words, in a speech. But Dick Nixon had the prescription. It consists, according to *Time,* of "some belt-tightening around the soft underbelly of business and labor, a generous dosage of self-reliance, and a faith that the U.S. Government has no intention of letting a full-scale depression develop."

Get those phrases, you auto workers—"belt-tightening . . . self-reliance . . . faith." That's the ticket, and Dick Nixon and *Time* have it.

Of course, if one happens to blunder upon a piece that one of the nation's best labor reporters, A. H. Raskin, wrote for *The New York Times* Sunday magazine section during the same week, one may wonder. Raskin's recession isn't quite as simple as *Time's*. He gives a picture of acres of factories standing idle in Detroit; of jobless workers whose kids don't want to go out and play because their blue jeans are six inches too short and full of patches; of men who walk and walk the streets looking for work and who baby-sit when they can get it, at 50 cents an hour. And Raskin adds: "An observer comes away from a week of trudging through somber streets full of somber homes and somber people wondering whether we know as much about keeping our economy from causing wholesale human suffering as we think we do."

It doesn't seem like quite the same world. But then one world is the world of a good reporter; the other, the never-never land of the so-called news magazines.

LETTERS

(*Continued from inside front cover*)

today demanded of state and federal agriculture officials . . . that fire-ant treatments be stopped until methods can be devised to safeguard wildlife, song birds, fish and human populations. . . . In support of its action, the Department cited field observations by conservation personnel showing that up to three-fourths of the wildlife and song birds may be killed on Alabama areas treated with heptachlor. . . ."

ROSCOE G. MANNIS
Birmingham, Ala.

On Edwin Godkin

Dear Sirs: Letters, papers and any other information concerning Mr. Edwin Lawrence Godkin are of vital importance to research now being done by a graduate student at The Johns Hopkins University.

It would be of inestimable aid and greatly appreciated if anyone who is in possession of, or knows the whereabouts of, any such material would contact:

MR. JOHN J. CLANCY, JR.
History Department
The Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, Maryland

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS and the ARTS

Irreverence in Poetry

M. L. Rosenthal

THE POETRY of wit, the poetry of satire, the poetry of passion—indeed, almost all poetry and other literature of high achievement—are allied with one another in at least one important respect. They show an independence of conventional moral premises which both gives a curious ambiguity to moral questions as they arise in literature and suggests that the art itself implicitly resists all attempts to subordinate it to the deities of the tribe. The relation between the ambiguity, so profoundly and uneasily a part of all human experience, and that irreverence which derives from our awareness of it is one of the great wellsprings of creative imagination. The satanic cry *"Non serviam!"* which the hero of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* takes up as his own comes to mind. So does William Carlos Williams' brave little poem "El Hombre":

> It's a strange courage
> you give me ancient star:
>
> Shine alone in the sunrise
> toward which you lend no part!

The reader who cannot take this implicit ambiguity and resistance into account is often shocked by the surface frivolity or immorality of a vast proportion of the world's supposedly greatest writings. Or he is shamefacedly delighted. In either event, he does not see how the work's larger bearings may include important "cynical" and elusive effects without being dominated by any one of them, how what holds a work like *Ulysses* or *Waiting for Godot* together and gives it its character is at once more impersonal and more deeply humane—though the product of what Dylan Thomas called a "sullen art" — than mere surface-testing can reveal. Even the reader who is not literal-minded will find it difficult to close in on the precise moral direction of such works, and the moral question remains at once the most pressing, the most mysterious and the least relevant question concerning their value.

We should probably let sleeping mysteries lie, or else posit something called "the higher aesthetic amorality." The former alternative, however, is boring; the latter, if not too pretentiously pushed, is promising. For art to be in some fashion irreverent and ethically uncommitted is for the artist a great psychological advantage—of a quite practical sort, to begin with. The poet especially, because he has so little space usually to work in, depends on the shockable in himself and his readers for maximum results in the way of emotional turmoil, hilarity and general excitement. Put it another way: the poet doesn't ask you the answers; he tells you the questions. When he is wickedly ambiguous he is in close touch with humanity's moral perspectives as they are generally felt. Blake gives us a magnificent parable on the subject:

> I askèd a thief to steal me a peach:
> He turnèd up his eyes.
> I ask'd a lithe lady to lie her down:
> Holy and meek she cries.
>
> As soon as I went an angel came:
> He wink'd at the thief
> And smil'd at the dame,
> And without one word spoke
> Had a peach from the tree.
> And 'twixt earnest and joke
> Enjoy'd the Lady.

A simpler instance of the principle, one that I came across only lately, is William Congreve's "The Peasant in Search of His Heifer," a charming "tale after M. de La Fontaine," which epitomizes in another fashion the same irony of experience that Blake reveals. The poem, written in 1720, is virtually unknown. The peasant in search of his heifer may be taken, for our purposes, as the literal man in search of specific answers; the lovers, and their reaction to him, as the impingement of a world of meanings and sensations not entirely encompassed by that innocent search. The poem as a whole (whose qualities, incidentally, suggest aspects of La Fontaine's work one would never sense in the translations of Marianne Moore) is full of the wicked ambiguity of poetically felt truth.

> It so befell: a silly Swain
> Had sought his Heifer long in vain;
> For wanton she had frisking stray'd,
> And left the Lawn, to seek the
> *Shade.*
> Around the Plain he rolls his Eyes,
> Then to the Wood, in Haste he
> hies;
> Where, singling out the fairest Tree,
> He climbs, in Hopes to hear or see.
> Anon, there chanc'd that Way
> to pass
> A jolly Lad and buxom Lass:
> The Place was apt, the Pastime
> pleasant;
> Occasion with her forelock present:
> The Girl agog, the Gallant ready;
> So lightly down he lays my Lady.
> But so she turn'd, or so was laid,
> That she some certain Charms
> display'd,
> Which with such Wonder struck his
> Sight,
> (With Wonder, much; more, with
> Delight)
> That loud he cry'd in Rapture,
> What!
> What see I, Gods! What see I not!
> But nothing nam'd; from whence
> 'tis guess'd,
> 'Twas more than well could be
> express'd.
> The Clown aloft, who lent an
> Ear,
> Strait stopped him short in mid
> Career:
> And louder cry'd, Ho! honest Friend,
> That of thy seeing seest no End;
> Dost see the Heifer that I seek?
> If do'st, pray be so kind to speak.

So the peasant lad, if he at all took second thought at the ambiguities here involved, must have discovered very soon that there was much more to life than the heifer he'd started out to find. Speculating further, let's assume he too found a buxom lass after a bit and, in his own turn, became a rapturous gallant. Still, he would soon become

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aware, however dimly, that such felicity is but an approximation to an ideal, itself instinctively felt to be only arbitrary. Like righteousness, it must lose its first clear bright outlines and grow into something less naively *easy;* more than a touch of darkness and the negative must enter the vision if it is not to grow meaningless entirely. Like the lady in Wallace Stevens' "Sunday Morning," he must complain that

> . . . . In contentment I still feel
> the need of some imperishable bliss.

And in that murky *dis*contentment he, and we, must feel a divine, an imperishable irreverence. It is the same astonished irreverence, because nothing is what it seems, that Stevens gives savage expression to in "The Emperor of Ice Cream." He is more mellowly—but as truly—sardonic in another poem, "Peter Quince at the Clavier," when he represents himself as a romantic lover whose desire for his beloved is a "music" of the spirit, but then mocks himself by comparing his idealized passion with the most grotesque and outrageous kind of lust:

> . . . . It is like the strain
> Waked in the elders by Susanna:
>
> Of a green evening, clear and warm,
> She bathed in her still garden, while
> The red-eyed elders, watching, felt
>
> The basses of their being throb
> In witching chords, and their thin
> blood
> Pulse pizzicati of Hosanna.

The feeling here is precisely the opposite of that reverence which Ambrose Bierce once defined as "the spiritual attitude of a man to a god and a dog to a man." Dogs bite men more frequently than the papers dare admit, and there is no child so dull he has not reveled in some hackneyed bit of unorthodox foolery with a revered text: the Lord's prayer, the oath of allegiance, the national anthem. The satirist, in fact, is so much in demand he is forgiven stylistic crudeness that would surely wreck the hopes of a writer in another mode. Who so dead of soul he could refuse to take joy in Bierce's parody of "America"—

> My country, 'tis of thee,
> Sweet land of felony,
> Of thee I sing—
> Land where my fathers fried
> Young witches and applied
> Whips to the Quaker's hide
> And made him spring. . . .

The intolerable burden of the awesome and the solemn is what the soul, aided by our common-sense knowledge of things as they are, resents. It wants to deal out kicks, good hard kicks with a hobnailed boot—either against the ponderous inanity of the Ineluctable, or against its intolerable harshness. How wonderful it is, how it brings the oxygen into the lungs, to give one of these kicks or see one given! It is worth the risk of getting booted hard oneself.

Kenneth Fearing writing of the "voice of the bought magistrate quivering in horror through the courtroom above prostitute and pimp," Ezra Pound laying it into the presumptions of the Left ("the fabians crying for the petrification of putrefaction,/for a new dung-flow cut in lozenges") and of the Right at the same time ("the conservatives chatting,/distinguished by gaiters of slum-flesh"), John Dryden three centuries ago slapping poor Thomas Shadwell around as "the last great prophet of tautology"—in all these writers and others like them the spleen we are all born with comes into its own. What they have to say is important in its particulars, no doubt, but one can't help seeing that the satiric spleen is essentially disinterested. It cares little where it strikes, and less for ultimate justice (that most ironic concept of all). *MacFlecknoe* existed potentially long before Dryden ever dreamed of bruising Shadwell's broad beam. And if the impulse were not disinterested, why should we take pleasure today in the trouncing of a man about whom most of us know and care nothing?

SO MUCH is the poetic art imbued with this impersonal spirit of irony and negation that we can hardly tell where the satirical leaves off and the purely lyrical begins. There is a kind of sacred blaspheming in which humor and wit are but the signs of an ultimate rage at the intransigence of things. Thus, the laughter in Yeats's "John Kinsella's Lament for Mrs. Mary Moore" expresses the same pain, but more bitterly, as Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" does:

> The priests have got a book that says
> But for Adam's sin
> Eden's garden would be there
> And I there within.
> No expectation fails there,
> No pleasing habit ends,
> No man grows old, no girl grows cold,
> But friends walk by friends.
> Who quarrels over halfpennies
> That plucks the trees for bread?
> *What shall I do for pretty girls*
> *Now my old bawd is dead?*

The sacred blaspheming carries over into much of our most serious love-poetry. Obviously latent in the symbolic language of eroticism religious mystics employ, it comes fully into its own when poets write directly of romantic and physical love. Long ago John Donne, later to become Dean of St. Paul's, ran the two motifs together in poem after poem; it has even been argued that in "To His Mistress Going to Bed" Donne deliberately used the motions of the sign of the Cross to symbolize the beatitudes of sexual discovery:

> License my roaving hands, and let
> them go,
> Before, behind, between, above,
> below.
> O my America! my new-found-land,
> My kingdome, safeliest when with
> one man man'd,
> My Myne of precious stones, my
> Emperie,
> How blest am I in this discovering
> thee!
> To enter in these bonds, is to be free;
> Then where my hand is set, my seal
> shall be. . . .

Such linking of the profane and sensual with the sacred may appear to some the blackest mockery, whether of divinity or of man's pretensions to faith. But one has only to turn to a poem like Howard Nemerov's "The Goose Fish" to see how much more deliberately modern poets have gone into the ironies and ambiguities of these themes. Donne's poem may veer carelessly toward the abyss; Nemerov's stares down over the edge. In "The Goose Fish" we find two

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lovers embracing on a beach in the moonlight:

> The ordinary night was graced
> For them by the swift tide of blood
> That silently they took at flood,
> And for a little time they prized
> Themselves emparadised. . . .

Suddenly they see,

> . . . . there underfoot,
> As though the world had found them out,
> The goose fish turning up, though dead,
> His hugely grinning head. . . .
>
> It was a wide and moony grin
> Together peaceful and obscene;
> They knew not what he would express. . . .

Nemerov's lovers take over the role of Congreve's peasant; that cold lunar grin cracks open their illusion with a pagan or sub-pagan ferocity. The horror of nothingness yawns there beneath them. One then thinks of the sweaty self-revulsion of Hopkins' "terrible sonnets," and by contrast the exuberantly sacrilegious imagery of Donne becomes the most drunkenly joyous kind of affirmation—absolutely devout after all.

IT IS NOT generally seen that the younger moderns have begun to dig below the surface of this kind of realization. Robert Lowell's "Words for Hart Crane," recently published in this magazine, has Crane telling America straight out:

> . . . . I,
> *Catullus Redivivus,* once the rage
> of the Village and Paris, used to play my role
> of homosexual wolfing the stray lambs. . . .
> Who asks for me, the Shelley of my age,
> must lay his heart out for my bed and board.

If we want our own poets to come into their own, we must take them as they are and stop looking for something else. Crane, notoriously and openly homosexual, desperately aware of the hostility of our culture to everything he was and stood for, and nevertheless anxious to find symbols of affirmation within the real and the necessary, had the negative strength that only adversity can create. A quarter-century after his death, his work still has the vital presence of his reckless confusions, of his pathetic need to gain some illusion of wholeness, and of the stench of his perversion and fear of failure. We may discount the homosexuality, in the sense that he would not have been the poet he was without finding *some* means of self-destruction and of shocking the temple guardians of Pulitzerdom. (See the second section of Kenneth Rexroth's "Thou Shalt Not Kill" for examples of what I mean here. And consider the case of Maxwell Bodenheim, whose heterosexuality saved neither his poetic character and skill nor his life.) That consideration aside, I should like to think that poets like Lowell and Nemerov, as well as a number of others now little known but soon to be recognized, are renewing our understanding of "the higher aesthetic amorality" as Crane did in his short lifetime. It is an "amorality" that brings us into the heart of the moral, an irreverence that is ultimately a piety. I have heard an old friend of Crane's say he was a great Rabelaisian personality in spirit and imagination, though few are now aware of that fact. Prepare for more surprises still, all ye heifer-seekers in the woods of poetry!

The Loss of Debate

THE ORDEAL OF WOODROW WILSON. By Herbert Hoover. McGraw-Hill. 303 pp. $6.

William Appleman Williams

WITH the exception of *American Individualism,* his essay on the political economy of mature capitalism, this policy memoir is more important than any of Herbert Hoover's other writings. It is misleadingly titled, laboriously written and poorly organized; yet it tells us more about the convergence of American conservatism and liberalism in the years of World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution than almost all the formal histories of that era. Anyone who is curious about the reason for the dearth of fundamental debate about American foreign policy can find a good part of the answer in this volume.

Ostensibly the story of the tragedy of Woodrow Wilson, the book is in truth an intimate and revealing account of the character and development of a broad consensus on foreign policy among American leaders of both parties. If it explains any tragedy, it is the one which threatens to overtake American policy. Hoover provides no new insights into the reasons why Wilson ultimately isolated himself from the coalition he led. As before, the reader can construct his own explanation by choosing from among Wilson's illness, his high church Presbyterianism, his psychological make-up, or his conception of the necessity and justice of American predominance throughout the world. Perhaps Wilson himself provided the most perceptive interpretation when he said that he "would never cry 'peace' so long as there is sin in the world."

The importance of Hoover's book lies in one key sentence: "In my work, even when Mr. Wilson did not entirely agree with me, he listened with patience and we were always able to find a path ahead upon which to travel successfully together." Hoover then illustrates that basic consensus by reference to ideas, men and actions. The idea which united Hoover and Wilson was very simple and also very big: America's material and spiritual power could and should be employed in an independent manner to end the war, establish the foundations of stability and peace, and maintain order in the future. They defined five major problems connected with that enterprise. It was necessary to oppose Communist Russia, restrain England, France and Japan, apply the principles of America's Open Door Policy to colonial and other underdeveloped areas, restore order and stability in Central Europe, and establish the League of Nations.

"Communist Russia," Hoover makes it clear, "was a specter which wandered into the Peace Conference almost daily." In another passage he describes the enterprise of peace-making as "a daily race against the spread of Communism." Hoover and Wilson agreed that the revolutionary upsurge was "based on a foundation of real social grievance," and hence understood the dangers of a wholly negative approach. Armed strength was necessary as a force in being to demonstrate American

WILLIAM A. WILLIAMS, editor of Shaping of American Diplomacy, *is assistant professor of History at the University of Wisconsin.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

opposition (and to check the Japanese), but military intervention in Russia was too costly from many points of view. Even if it should succeed, it would involve America "in years of police duty" and limit its freedom of action *vis-à-vis* Britain, France and Japan.

Hoover and Wilson therefore turned to the manipulation of food and other relief supplies as the best means of terminating the radical movement. Appealing to the Bolshevik's humanitarianism, they offered aid in return for an agreement to recognize the status quo in Russia, and on condition that the Bolsheviks pay cash for the assistance. Interpreting the offer as a maneuver to give the anti-Bolsheviks an opportunity to consolidate their position in various parts of Russia, the Bolsheviks refused.

ELSEWHERE the Hoover-Wilson approach worked more successfully. In Hungary, for example, the United States established a "tight blockade" and effectively controlled food supplies to overthrow Bela Kun's government. With that example on the record, Hoover's threat of similar action proved sufficient to stabilize affairs in Austria. "With the President's approval I authorized the Austrians to placard Vienna with a statement from me to the effect that any such [radical] action would jeopardize the city's already sparse food supply." In Germany, however, such a "rigid blockade [was] utter folly because it created unemployment, prevented economic recovery and fertilized Communism." The Hoover-Wilson policy was not altogether politically and ideologically motivated, however, for Hoover saw that "there must be instant expansion of marketing of American surpluses or there will be a great financial reaction in the United States."

In those and similar ventures, Hoover and Wilson were backed and assisted by a bipartisan staff of tremendous ability and energy. Bernard M. Baruch, Charles Schwab, Edward M. Hurley, Vance McCormick, John Foster Dulles, Robert S. Lovett, Robert S. Brookings and Norman Davis emerge as particularly important figures. Those men stressed three lines of action: (1) support the new Germany, (2) keep American power and programs unencumbered by restrictive alliances with Britain and France, but (3) join with those nations "to secure stability of government" throughout the world. For many months, therefore, Hoover went along with Wilson's emphasis on Article I of the League Treaty, which guaranteed the boundaries of the signatory nations. So did such others as Elihu Root, Charles Evans Hughes and Henry L. Stimson.

From the beginning Hoover had reservations. But the vital point, which Hoover clarifies once and for all, is that the reservations concerned not the objectives but the means. He shared Wilson's moral fervor and agreed that "a steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic nations." "Having gone in with our eyes open," Hoover explained at the time, "and with a determination to free ourselves and the rest of the world from the dangers that surround us, we cannot now pull back from the job." To that extensive degree, Hoover shared Wilson's propensity for solving one problem by resolving it into a larger one.

Hoover's doubts concerned "whether an organization so revolutionary and so young could successfully carry the burdens imposed by Article X." Instead, the Hoover group thought "that the Covenant provided a powerful organization; that its provisions for determining aggressors, and its authority to use economic and military sanctions, were ample weapons against aggression."

Wilson's refusal to accept that more subtle and flexible approach led to the defeat of the League Treaty. But Hoover's book makes it apparent that it did not end the bipartisan consensus in favor of America's active and continued assertion of its leading role in world affairs. Neither did it alter the objective: to stabilize the status quo. The Great Debates have never been over the what or the whether, but only over the how. Small wonder the crisis has persisted into our own time.

Torches in the Street

THE SICILIAN VESPERS. By Steven Runciman. Cambridge University Press. 356 pp. $5.50.

Kenneth Rexroth

A COUPLE of years back I had occasion to review Steven Runciman's *History of the Crusades,* and before that his *Medieval Manichee,* a study of the Christian Dualist heresy. From the very beginning of his career it has been apparent that Runciman is a historian of no mean order. He has done the thing all modern historians hope to do, and almost none manages: he has combined the writing of history as literature ("historiography" in academic argot) and the study of history as a scholarly discipline, if not an exact science.

Henry Adams, Francis Parkman, Prescott, Gibbon, Froissart, Tacitus, Thucydides, Ssu-ma Ch'ien—for many centuries the Muse of History was one of the chief of the minor goddess and history was a major art. Alas for our day, she has fallen on evil times and become a maundering academic drudge. A writer like Arnold Toynbee owes his reputation as a stylist essentially to the outrageous barbarity of his style, its endless verbosity and eloquent muddle, like a country vicar on one of the duller Sundays After Trinity. His reputation as a philosopher of history is due to the procrustean rashness of his scantily substantiated hypotheses. In her old age the Muse has fallen into the hands of the Goths who know her not.

Steven Runciman is a horse of another color. He is an indisputably good writer, clear, perspicuous, able to marshal immense detail and vast casts of characters; able, again, to communicate that feeling of the very time and place which is perhaps the first virtue of good historical writing. His subject this time is the thirteenth-century struggle for supremacy among the states and cities of the Mediterranean; a struggle which centered in Sicily, but spread as far as Germany and the Holy Land, and which was watched with more than neutral interest by the powers of England and France. It may be an illusion, but we live again in the quarries of Sicily with the dying Athenians, and on the bloody causeway with Cortez and Malinche. So we are there, our iron shoes clanging on the arid stone floors of that immense architectural hallucination, Krak of the Knights; in the desert of the Holy Land, we watch the leper King of Jerusalem wither and die like the Fisher King of the Grail Romances—it is an infectious verisimilitude. You can see, smell and hear Manfred's and Conradin's armies, trapped in melees at narrow bridges, horses splashing through fords and swirling in high waters, the terrible sun on afternoon battlefields full of men in stinking armor, the Sicilian burghers running through the streets with torches and long knives. This participation extends even to certain engaging prejudices. Runciman is now not quite as down on Frederick II as he was when he

KENNETH REXROTH is the author of One Hundred Poems from the Chinese *and* In Defense of the Earth.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wrote the Crusade book, but he doesn't like him nor his bastard, Manfred, either. You feel that this is for no *bona fide* historical, social or political reason, but for a residual British prudery. Both of them just might have made it at lurid Balliol, but never at Cambridge. They were frank atheists and practically wallowed in what Dr. Kinsey used to call extra-marital sexual outlets. That Frederick II was the only civilized ruler in the West between classical and modern times is beside the point for Steven Runciman. He is awed by his magnificent appetites and the splendor of his mind, but he isn't going to be pleased if he can help it.

The Sicilian Vespers is much more than a study of that legendary revolt itself. It is the story of the final breakdown of the possibility of the Empire, as distinguished from the Imperial dream; of the moral compromise of the Papacy that was to lead eventually to Papal Courts worthy of Suetonius, and the disgust of the Reformation; of the beginning of the invidious and destructive role of France in the peninsula, that was to endure at least until Napoleon III; and, wistful enough in its special way, the last assertion of the spirit of the Greek *polis*, the last bright flicker of the precious city-state *ethos* in a Greek Italy then two thousand years old. Through it all glitter the brocades and marbles of the oriental, pagan, birth of the Renaissance, the songs of the troubadours and Arabic minstrels, the speculations of Hebrew Cabbalists and Greek-Italian Aristotelians, the mysteries of alchemists and magicians—the last two Hohenstauffen courts, where what the French call *l'esprit laique,* the character of renaissance and modern man, was invented.

Plenty has been written about Frederick II and Manfred, some of it bombasically romantic, but this whole world, what was really the southeast borderland of Western civilization, has seldom been seen steadily and whole. It is the march, the pressure area, between Gothic, Byzantine and Arabic civilizations, all three in their decline or rather decadence. It is hard to think of a more splendidly caparisoned historical stage, or one more crowded with spectacular characters, or one more haunted by fascinating mysteries and immoralities. It provided Gibbon with some of his most encrusted and brilliant pages. It requires a tremendous amount of hard work to coordinate its documents and sources and to disentangle its dilemmas and disputes. It is certainly not overcrowded with historians. Steven Runciman seems to have staked a claim on it as very specially his own. Long may he flourish, for he certainly makes it fascinating reading.

The African Clown

THE SOUTH AFRICAN TREASON TRIAL. By Lionel Forman and E. S. (Solly) Sachs. Monthly Review Press. 216 pp. $5.

Philip Woodyatt

MR. ERIC LOUW is Minister of External Affairs for the Union of South Africa and is the man who, so to speak, officially voices his government's writhing self-consciousness. That he takes this job very seriously indeed—obsessively, you might say—is illustrated by the fact that the State Information Office, which is under his hand, has standing orders to keep him supplied with news stories, articles and commentary from the outside world which are critical of the government and the ruling Nationalist Party. Mr. Louw reportedly keeps a clutch of these in his pockets at all times. It is his regular practice to read them into the record of Parliament with what appears to be masochistic relish.

There is no shortage of material to gratify the Minister's hobby; for no government—certainly none in modern times—has ever matched this one for clownish cruelty, a kind of earnest, stumble-footed, ridiculous nastiness.

In the decade since they came to power, the leaders of the Nationalist Party have succeeded in making South Africa the unchallenged world symbol of blind, fanatical racial bigotry. By a series of strokes initiated at the outset they quickly stepped out ahead of our own South and other contenders on the African continent. But their crowning achievement in solidifying this image of themselves is the sordid undertaking which inspired the present book—the arrest of, and proceedings against, 156 South Africans from every race, stratum and corner of the Union, on the charge of high treason.

On December 5, 1956, Attorney General "Blackie" Swart's bully-boys of the secret police carried out simultaneous dawn raids on the homes of the men and women marked for arrest. The drama has been ponderously unfolding ever since; *The South African Treason Trial* gives us the first one-piece account of these events.

THIS book is not an "objective" chronicle. In a concluding note Mr. Sachs, makes "no apologies for writing with passion" and expresses the hope that readers "will forgive us for any shortcomings." And there are shortcomings: some result from obvious haste in writing and publication, others are the inevitable result of mixing reporting with political exhortation. For those who may wish the full, straight facts—which are, heaven knows, awful enough — this book will not suffice. The government's case, whatever its merits, is part of the story, yet the book tells us only its most ludicrous elements; Mr. Forman's picture of spontaneous, total, unclouded solidarity within and among the militant political groups opposing the government is over-enthusiastic; and Mr. Sachs could have mentioned the increasingly effective work of enlightened Afrikaner Nationalists, many within the Dutch Reformed Church, who are horrified at the mad course their government is pursuing.

No matter. The Nationalist Government will not forgive the authors for this work, but just about everyone else in the world will. Lionel Forman, himself one of the defendants, is a young Cape Town attorney with a talent for political action. Solly Sachs is an almost legendary figure, a prodigious labor organizer who proved that even in South Africa, white and black can work side by side in harmony and mutual respect. He was too successful. The Nationalists trained their fire on him and made it fruitless for him to try to continue. He now lives in England.

In a technical sense the trial has not yet started. The "preliminary examination," corresponding to our grand jury indictment procedure, occupied more than a year and ended only on January 30 of this year. It resulted in high-treason indictments against ninety-five of the original 156; the trial itself will presumably begin this spring. The team of Sachs and Forman promises another installment on this phase of the business; let's hope they are joined by colleagues whose accounts will help to fill Mr. Louw's capacious pockets.

PHILIP WOODYATT has been a newsman for CBS, an international affairs officer for the Department of the Army and an executive with various educational organizations. For the past four years he has been in South Africa, studying political and social developments.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MUSIC

Lester Trimble

AT the moment of this writing, the New York City Opera Company's first season of American works is drawing to a close with a final added week of Kurt Weill's *Lost in the Stars*. The project has been a rousing success. It has given a fascinating insight into contemporary American opera; the audiences have been large and enthusiastic; and countless composers, including those who were permitted to roam about during rehearsals, have been stung by the opera bug. In the long run, that may prove to be the season's most important result.

But there have been others. It has been made apparent, for example, that American opera, as a genre, is still in an uncrystallized stage. Each composer seems to concoct his own mixture of dramatic and musical elements, working in the midst of myriad older traditions and a few young ones. Through all the works produced ran an obvious desire to create a lyric theatre which would appeal not only to the traditional grand-opera audience, but to younger, less conventional people as well. Early in the season, I thought I heard a Broadway influence in some of the scores. I have since concluded that this influence, in most cases, was far more a matter of staging than of music. And this was to be expected, since Julius Rudel, the company's General Director, has stated a firm belief that Broadway techniques should be employed at the City Center whenever they can make opera productions more attractive. He imported for the special season directors Carmen Capalbo, Jose Quintero, Frank Corsaro and Herman Schumlin, whose careers have all been associated with the legitimate theatre. Their work was immensely stimulating, and I do not doubt that it will exert a considerable effect upon the future of American opera.

As for the music itself, however, I do not think that Broadway exerted an influence about which we really need to worry. What bothered me more was the deep conservatism revealed in almost every score. To be sure, this conservatism appeared in different guises. In Douglas Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe* and Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* it seemed a kind of neutral blandness; *The Taming of the Shrew* by Giannini was frankly slick and technicolored; Menotti's *The Medium* and *The Old Maid and the Thief* were, as are all his operas, eclectic and designed to *épater* nobody. These descriptions are all to my mind synonyms for conservatism, and in no work did I discern a thrust toward a deeply felt or adventuresome idiom. Always and everywhere was the desire to please a theoretically frightened audience by giving them something very like what they had heard before.

THIS, to my way of thinking, is an unfortunate business, but I am grateful to the City Center's American season for documenting a theory I have long held—that the American operatic stage is almost entirely occupied by conservatives and eclectics. I am also grateful to the season for having given so many works of this character that the second and third turn of the wheel will be the more likely to bring forth composers with an impulse toward strong, original expression. Let it be understood that I am not asking for masterpieces. It is courageous impulses we need.

It was profoundly disappointing to me that the only work I heard in this series which seemed to try for strong contemporary statement in terms of music and of drama should have disintegrated like a puff-ball on second hearing. This was the late Robert Kurka's opera, *The Good Soldier Schweik*. I was entranced by it on opening night. Its orchestral color, achieved by the use of an orchestra restricted to winds, brasses and percussion, seemed remarkable, apposite to the story and poignant. The percussion writing in itself was expressive and certainly of virtuoso caliber. Kurka was obviously latching himself on to the Stravinsky and Prokofieff traditions—in other words, the serious tradition—as well as the huckster style of Kurt Weill. Indeed, it was all so wonderful that I went back again, just to check my reactions.

And I found "just one of those things." When I sat in a different seat, farther from the heart of the dynamic percussion section, the music came to me with a different mien. Those portions which had impressed by sheer percussive or motoric energy, grew fainter and less impressive by virtue of distance. The music betrayed its thinness, and I became aware that I had, on first hearing, absorbed the whole show, and there was nothing left to discover. Clever elements of construction which had seemed to place the work so far in advance of anything else I had heard during the season, turned out to be superficial. The text, by Lewis Allen, was as linguistically vulgar and badly rhymed as the daily critics had maintained. And, in sum, I was sorely tempted to have a cigarette shortly after the second act began.

THEATRE

Robert Hatch

LEAVING the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre (formerly the Globe) after the third evening performance of *The Visit*, I heard someone at the rear of the orchestra crying "boo" with self-righteous vigor, and I was glad to hear it. I don't agree that the play or performance deserved this comment, but it shows much more clearly than the applause — a standardized rite in our theatre — that the play arouses ponderable reactions. The Lunts have often been reprimanded for putting their talents to frivolous ends, and it is a pleasure to report that, for better or worse, they are currently engaged in a work that has more character than their own charm.

The Visit, by a Swiss dramatist named Friedrich Duerrenmatt, could be rather easily clawed by any bright student of theatre form. The central conflict has been staged and decided by the end of the first act. Moreover—and stemming really from this circumstance—a good deal of the later detail seems motivated as much by the needs of the playwright as by the imperatives of his characters, and an inconvenient proportion of the impact has no deeper source than carefully-staged visual effects. It may be that Peter Brooks, the director, has over-embellished the play—it being a vehicle for this almost legendary couple —but he did have the problem of keeping the audience occupied for a long time after the trap was sprung.

Despite such reservations, the play is arresting and memorably odd. The plot is as simple as an aphorism. The richest widow in the world returns after many years to the place of her birth, a town in an unspecified but Germanic section of Europe. The town is almost dead, and it developes that she has impoverished it by secretly buying and suspending all the small industry on which it had depended. But the natives do not know this and anticipate great assistance from a lady whose philan-

THREE BOOKS

1) **A DOCTOR'S APPRENTICESHIP**— Autobiographical Sketches of an 83 year old physician and psychiatrist, **Dr. B. Liber.** 630 pp **$5.00**

2) **A GLANCE INTO PEOPLE'S LIVES**— The same doctor's impressions of miserable, happy and beautiful characters and interesting situations from his practice. 144 packed pp **$2.00**

3) **THE NEW RUMANIA**— Communist country revisited after sixty years, by the same author. 190 pp $2.00 **2 copies for $3.00**

All 3—$6.00 (add 3% sales tax in Greater New York)

RATIONAL LIVING, 65 W. 95th St., N.Y. 25

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thropy is world acclaimed. She does make a stunning offer—she will give the town a billion marks (wild rejoicing), but on the one condition that the town will kill the well-loved Anton Schill, local grocer (the two protagonists are of course played by Miss Fontanne and Mr. Lunt). It is recalled that, when a youth, this man denied being the father of her child, produced witnesses (now shown to be perjured) to name her a trollop and caused her to seek her fortune as a whore. She subsequently married Levantine oil. The shocked town cheers Herr Schill to the echo, but Madame Zachanassian remarks that she is quite prepared to wait, and that concludes the first act.

The rest of the play works at details: how the townspeople begin to buy on credit in a mood of optimism whose source they will not acknowledge, how their would-be benefactor gets married but sends her husband back to South America so that she can resolve in death her love-hate for Schill, how the town rationalizes what it will do as the operation of high, though delayed, justice. The nice irony, what holds you, is that Schill really does deserve punishment and that his neighbors are his proper judges. The billion marks corrupts them even as it wakes them to their duty.

The tone of all this is curious, but nevertheless insinuating. If one were being rigorous, it might not hold together, partly because of the author's eclectic restlessness, partly because of the surface gaiety the Lunts like to stamp on everything they do. Madame Zachanassian travels with an entourage consisting of the judge who presided at her trial, now called Bobby and acting as an entranced major domo; the two false witnesses, blinded and presumably emasculated and now serving as attendant musicians; a pair of American thugs who double as torturers and bearers of their lady's sedan chair, and a black panther (her nickname for Schill had been "black panther"). It is a little difficult to maitain serious attention in the presence of so much *outré* luggage from Beckett, Sartre, Kafka and the side show. American audiences can scarcely fail to drop occasionally into the mood of comic-strip frightfulness.

Then too the behavior described is concentration-camp desperation, but the town of Gullen does not appear to have been pushed to the simplicity of the concentration camp. The citizens talk desperation, but no one looks desperate —only rather down at heels. I suspect that the Lunts do not like real pain to appear on their stage—a genteel shabbiness is as far as they are prepared to go. Therefore, if you wish really to be attacked by *The Visit*, you must make yourself unusually vulnerable. Otherwise, it is very obviously a play.

As for the production, Miss Fontanne and her husband provide two bright pools of competence around which some excellent acting is done. With the Lunts, of course, competence has become an art in itself—only I felt that they were acting according to their unsurpassed stage knowledge, not according to what these parts impelled from them. The work is perhaps too easy for them —what they do works so well that they are rarely forced to be. The supporting cast is large and I cannot itemize it. There are no false or ill-proportioned performances—Mr. Brooks's professional good taste has touched everyone—and I call particular attention to the conduct of Eric Porter as the burgomaster and to Peter Woodthorpe as the school master. Each, when the occasion comes, steps forward as a firm center of human personality. As much as anything, their work is what makes this production disturbing and more than a somewhat novel shadow box for the high pantomime of the Lunts.

BECAUSE it is written in blank verse and deals for the most part with "great matters," Christopher Fry's language evokes in all of us an echo of the Elizabethans. It is, however, a disheartening echo. The Elizabethans beat out a new language, a bright weapon, whose richness and drive supported the energy of their passions. Fry is a devotee of words; language is for him a romp—all the bright adjectives, the agile verbs, the charming plays of juxtaposition and surprise. As the tension of his plays rise, so does Mr. Fry's loquacity. He drowns passion in speech, makes actors of his characters and has never considered the heart too full for words. He is not interested in the battles of the drawing room, and lacks the assassination of wit needed for such encounters, but he makes an ingenious plaything out of a heroic style.

In *The Firstborn* (Coronet), the manner is peculiarly depressing. The book of Exodus will not lend itself to brocade; it is a terrible story, a parable of stone, and it cannot by verbal embellishment be made palatable to humanists. Mr. Fry has supposed that the tyrants of Egypt and the children of Israel were people not unlike ourselves, except that they conversed rather more eloquently. His Moses is an idealist, a social reformer; his Pharaoh, a manager of Empire who comes from his siestas in a mood that could be induced by reading in Voltaire. Faced with the punishments of an implacable Jahveh — the plagues of locusts, of frogs; the Nile water turned to blood — he says in effect that people are forever blaming the weather on the administration. And Pharaoh's sister, she who found Moses and gave him his life, appears in her years of late maturity as a maiden lady whose cultivated intelligence and strong feelings have been turned toward wry melancholy by lack of commitment. Her contemporaries live in Jane Austen.

The theory that human nature is pretty much the same anywhere and any time is one of the superficialities of world-mindedness and liberal brotherhood. It makes our dealings with the Chinese, the Arabs, the Russians even more difficult than they need to be; in the cause of psychological identification, it extracts the armatures from the great legends of our heritage. If you think of Moses and Pharaoh as two pig-headed men, one of whom possessed the secret weapon of God's wrath; if you must sympathize with Moses because, although his team wins, victory costs him the life of his old playmate, Ramses, you have lost a great deal and gained, I think, very little. Exodus is not social history, however much it may be based on events; it is a concept of man's relationship to God through which the human race has passed. Traces of that concept color our spirits, but that is not to say that God spoke from a storm cloud to men and women aware of themselves as post-Renaissance individuals. This is anachronism, not imagination.

In this production, *The Firstborn* plays better than it is. Katharine Cornell, Anthony Quayle and Torin Thatcher give it considerable visual and oratorical dignity. They move well and they speak impressively; being actors of some virtuosity, they obviously enjoy the exercise of Fry's ornate language, though inevitably it makes mouthpieces of them. The result, nevertheless, is turgid and non-communicative; the action stalls and the cataclysms turn perversely funny in this rational atmosphere.

PERSONALS

BRITISH SHOES FOR GENTLEMEN at a fraction of their American retail price! $10.95 includes duty and import charges. Delivery in ten days from receipt of order. Unconditional money-back guarantee. Write for free illustrated catalogue. **Steven N. Williams, Ltd., 40 Chatham Road, Short Hills, New Jersey.**

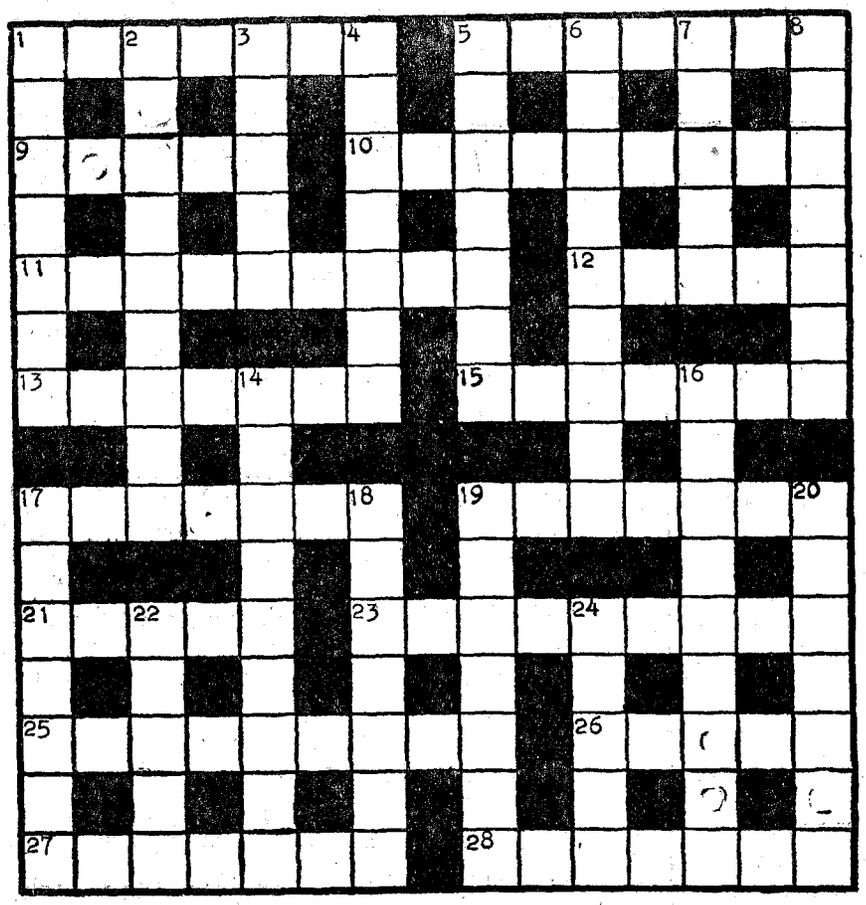
TELEVISION FLOOR SAMPLES — Will be sold at dealer's cost to make room for our Motor Scooters. Prices start at $75.00. **Standard Brand Dist.,** 143 Fourth Avenue (13th & 14th Sts.), N.Y. GR 3-7819. **1 hour free parking.**

AUTHENTIC SPANISH BULLFIGHT POSTER Two for $3 postpaid. **Research Publications, Box 305-N, Wall Street Station, N.Y.C. 5.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Crossword Puzzle No. 772

By FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS:

1 and 10 Modestly impressive, but certainly not like 9. (3, 2, 2, 7, 2)
5 A mouthful for Demosthenes? (7)
9 Feeling bad? You're probably not up to this! (5)
10 See 1 across
11 Do they pile up wood again, or just tape. (9)
12 Wants to 8 down as a matter of urgency. (5)
13 Didn't act like Washington to possess a pet command. (3, 4)
15 In the manner of a mist. (7)
17 Could be found in 9's, but they're not very bright. (7)
19 Could hardly be expected to make for easy inspiration when a humorist has no psychological tendencies. (7)
21 A Greek star, perhaps. (5)
23 Tropical island grain? (9)
25 Diner-out, I fancy, but displaying what can't hurt you here. (9)
26 Practice material. (5)
27 Tuck might have been fooled by it. (5, 2)
28 Now I get away from a naval command at home, perhaps. (7)

DOWN:

1 Might be tickled by 9. (7)
2 Stick on the beat? (9)
3 Present. (5)
4 The sort of 17 down which is more than behind. (7)
5 and 19 down By comparison, Judy's boy friend is happy (7, 2, 5)
6 The 4 Roman Empire was. (9)
7 Stay representative, when it comes to U.N. (5)
8 Content sort of fits, as you tell about it. (7)
14 It might involve changing an element to a higher positive valence. (9)
16 History might come natural to him, but he's more specialized than that! (9)
17 The closest sort of oriental? (7)
18 Notices part of it, at least! (7)
19 See 5 down
20 Leaves hanging out of a number of corners? (7)
22 What the courageous have to pull. (5)
24 One's obviously out of part of the Malay Archipelago—and much further west! (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 771

ACROSS: 1 BOLD-FACED TYPE; 10 ARTISAN; 11 EXPLAIN; 12 CONFORM; 13 AVOCADO; 14 INSULIN; 15 LENIENT; 16 OFFICES; 20 SUBJOIN; 23 IBERIAN; 24 LAMBENT; 25 UNITING; 26 INKWELL; 27 SHIFTLESSNESS. DOWN: 2 OUTINGS; 3 DESPOIL; 4 AGNOMEN; 5 EYEBALL; 6 TRPHOON; 7 PLACATE; 8 SANCTIMONIOUS; 9 UNFORTUNATELY; 17 FLEMISH; 18 CAITIFF; 19 SENEGAL; 20 SULLIES; 21 BUMPKIN; 22 ONENESS.

RESORTS

Gala Opening May 29th
Decoration Day Weekend
The Slutskys have planned an exciting and memorable '58 season
RESERVE NOW
IN THE ADIRONDACKS
CRYSTAL LAKE
LODGE
Chestertown 1, N. Y.
Phones: 3830—in N.Y.C. MU 7-2978

Stonegate LODGE
ON LONG LAKE, N. Y.
Informal Adult Resort in the Adirondacks
Charming Estate — Limited to 90 — Pollen Free
Summer Stock — Concert Trio — Dance Band
Crafts · Delicious Food · Motor Boating
Tennis · Golf · Fishing
SALLY RAY—Folk and Square Dance Leader
N.Y. Office: 250 W. 57th · Circle 6-6386
Reduced Rates to July 10 Louis A. Roth, Dir.

WINDY HILL ON ORANGE LAKE Tel.: Newburgh 1232
A pleasantly informal vacation in friendly atmosphere. Swimming, Boating, Fishing on Natural Lake. Badminton, Volley Ball, Ping-pong, other sports. Records, books. Summer Theatre, Golf nearby. Food of excellent quality in generous quantity. $55.00 Weekly; $8.00 Daily; Weekend: Fri. Supper thru Sun. Dinner $16.
1½ hrs. from N.Y.C. via Thruway
Jane C. Arenz, R.D. No. 1, Walden, N.Y.

ONLY 50 MILES FROM N.Y.C.
Entertainment. Dancing. Fireproof bldg. Air-conditioned. Elevator. 8 mile Lake. Superb cuisine. In New York City call at local rate:
FAirbanks 5-7227
MAhopac 8-8449
FOREST house
LAKE MAHOPAC, N. Y.

LAKE LOUANNE, ideal spot for rest and relaxation. 200 acres woodland, rustic trails, private lake, boating, swimming, fishing. Large rooms, each with private bath. Small group, informal, friendly service. **Louis Cudroff, Old Clinton Road, Westbrook, Conn. Phone: MOntrose 9-2465.**

PUBLICATIONS

NEW STATESMAN. Britain's leading weekly review. The only paper in the world to carry articles from Dulles and Khrushchev. **Special half-price offer to new readers: $2 for 6 months. NEW STATESMAN (N), Great Turnstile, London WC1, England.**

SERVICES

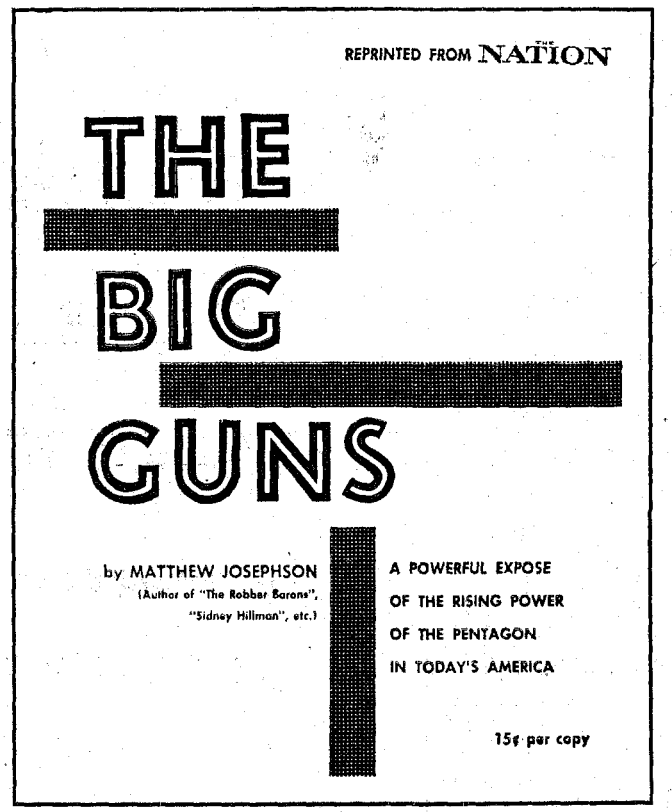
UNIVERSITY TELEVISION SERVICE
(Manhattan, Bronx Yonkers)
150 W. Kingsbridge Rd., Bronx 63, N.Y.
CY 8-0420

Advertising Rates
CLASSIFIED
74c a line (6 words)
Three-line minimum
CLASSIFIED DISPLAY
$7.42 per inch (minimum)
The NATION
333 Sixth Avenue, New York 14, N.Y.
CHelsea 2-8400

Printed in the U. S. A. by RCR Publication Printers Corp., N. Y. C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What You Should Know About the Pentagon Controversy


REPRINTED FROM NATION
THE BIG GUNS
by MATTHEW JOSEPHSON
(Author of "The Robber Barons", "Sidney Hillman", etc.)
A POWERFUL EXPOSE OF THE RISING POWER OF THE PENTAGON IN TODAY'S AMERICA
15¢ per copy

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON'S series in *The Nation* on "The Big Guns" is still the best background document for following the current hearings on the Pentagon Reorganization Bill.

ORDER YOUR reprints (15c each, less for bulk orders) on the coupon below.

THE NATION

THE NATION, 333 Sixth Avenue, NYC 14

Please send me.....reprints of "The Big Guns" by Matthew Josephson. I enclose:

- ☐ .15 for 1 copy
- ☐ $1.00 for 10 copies
- ☐ $4.50 for 50 copies
- ☐ $ 8.00 for 100 copies
- ☐ $35.00 for 500 copies
- ☐ $65.00 for 1000 copies

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY ..... ZONE..... STATE.....

5-17-58

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED